The Holy Spirit & The Mystics

H. M. B. Reid

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THE CROALL LECTURES, 1925

The Holy Spirit and the Mystics

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE MYSTICS

BY THE

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UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY NEW YORK

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First published . . 1925

PRINCETON
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NEW YORK

Made and Printed in Great Britain
T. and A. CONSTABLE LTD., Printers, Edinburgh

THE following lectures are printed very much as they were prepared for delivery. Their origin is indicated in the first lecture. They claim no special originality; and the thesis that any Mysticism, which can properly be regarded as Christian, is due to the work of the Holy Spirit, is one which has very ancient authority. No attempt has been made to discuss the various "cults" which either involve or suggest non-Christian sources or prejudices. It is hoped that nothing in the lectures will discourage those who are devout believers in the personality and work of the Spirit. On the other hand, the resources of Mysticism for religious faith and comfort are more or less clearly indicated.

The lecturer feels keenly sensible of the incompleteness of this discussion of a great and growing theme. He takes leave to offer his grateful acknowledgments to the

Croall Trustees who appointed him, to the various ministers who lent him their pulpits, and to many unknown friends who gave him a patient hearing.

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THE subject of these lectures has been dictated by several considerations. In the first place, the deed of foundation of the Croall Trust contains a list of subjects proposed to the lecturers, most of which have been dealt with by former lecturers; but the "Person and Work of the Holy Spirit" have not been treated.

In the second place, the obvious need, at the present juncture, of some discussion of this difficult *locus communis* in doctrine seemed to justify the attempt, however humble or indecisive, to direct the thoughts of interested readers to the subject.

And thirdly, there appeared to be such a close connection between the doctrine referred to and the remarkable revival of mysticism in the literature of to-day, that a short study of it in relation to mysticism might help to clear the thoughts of Christian people on the matter. And the main inducement was to see whether the doctrine

of the Holy Ghost is not in reality the basis of a true and rational mysticism, and to offer tenable distinctions between the true and the false mysticism.

Accordingly, I propose to myself two tasks, both important and both demanding serious attention. The first is, to trace rapidly the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures and in the consciousness of the Church. The second is, to indicate the relation of mystical experience to that doctrine, as well as to aspects of thought in literature, philosophy, and science. In this way, it was thought guidance might be given in some degree to Christian people in the conduct of their religious life. The well-known fact that untold numbers of devout persons in all ranks cherish and ponder more or less mystical manuals makes it undesirable that they should do so with a sense of uneasiness, or that they should overlook the fact that they are thus coming into contact with the Spirit of Truth.

In the present lecture, the special Christian theory of the Holy Spirit arising out of our Supreme Standard, the Holy Scriptures, is passed in rapid review.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Scriptures for us include both the Old and the New Testament, and it is not safe to assume that the former can be excluded from our study. It may be that the scientific student of the Old Testament documents is inclined to relegate them to the sphere of historical religion alone; such a course is probably unavoidable, and has practically been adopted in Sir J. G. Frazer's volumes on *The Folk-Lore of the Old Testament.* But the Christian and edifying use of the Old Testament may not lightly be ignored or abandoned. There runs through it a certain steady current, leading onward to the ampler outflow of belief and devotion recorded in the New Testament. It is nevertheless no real diminution or disparagement of Old Testament literature that it finds remarkable parallels in older religions. That, surely, is just what we should expect and even welcome in a universal instinct of religion. But, for us, the Old Testament is essentially linked with its fulfilment; it remains an indispensable part of sacred Scripture, not indeed severed from the general human

trend toward God, but specially conditioned and enriched by its close ties to what followed in the New. So little ought we to neglect the Old Testament premonitions that perhaps its recognition of the Spirit is in parts among the noblest features of our Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. If, as many leading authorities think, man first awoke to religion from the sense of a life invisible as the wind and bearing with it the flutter of departed souls, then the testimony of language itself conveys a primitive belief in Spirit. Such a theory (known as Animism) is not inconsistent with the Old Testament records, any more than it is with underlying popular beliefs.[1] To primitive man the world was always mysterious. The sense of its mystery may almost be taken as the condition of his transition from the unreasoning animal to the stature of manhood. Religion, starting as mystery and growing into wonder and awe, is the decisive difference between the animal and the man. The reference to the Spirit "moving on the face of the waters," and entering into man as "the

[1] Animism was first suggested by E. B. Tylor as the origin of religion.

breath of life," is paralleled in other ancient records, but it retains its significance for to-day. It occurs throughout the Old Testament in many phrases which announce a settled belief in a spiritual invisible power operating with distinct design not only in nature, but also in man.

The development of this idea is traceable on two lines which have become clearer as the Old Testament documents fell into the probable order of time.

The first of these and the older is associated with primitive notions of the Living One, Jehovah, or even of Elohim the plural name, as entirely comprehensive of the national life and of Nature itself in its many diversified wonders. Every nook and corner of Nature might reveal this Presence; no man might evade it; it could be known as readily in the "still small voice" as in the thunder. Pantheistic as this feeling was, it admitted the existence of several forms of the one divine Fact.

The second line of movement approached nearer to the individual; this Spirit might enter into some chosen leader, or even into a large body of men, and animate them to irresistible utterances or to mighty and

even superhuman deeds. Such men were not always prophets, for they might be soldiers, statesmen, or heroes of the common people. But gradually the Prophet became the chief vehicle of the Spirit of Jehovah. Men were even trained to the gifts and business of prophecy. The pantheistic movement finding God everywhere present was succeeded by the later dominance of Prophecy, especially after Israel's fall from power and its compulsory acceptance of humble place among surrounding nations. Then the great prophets came to represent a people driven back upon God, no more relying upon the arm of flesh. Their spokesmen might indeed dream of a coming triumph, but they could not point to any actual or immediate achievement; and the Spirit for them is a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. It was thus out of the Nation's defeat and suffering that the higher spiritual experiences came. The dead bones in the valley arose and stood upon their feet; but it was a sublime enthusiasm which caused the revival. The Spirit now became a Holy Spirit, not a triumphant appeal to the physical qualities which produced the

King and the Warrior. Those who loved the Lord met often together, but it was to practise religion, not statecraft.

The sources of apocalyptic thought thus released became still more effective by the dispersion of the Jew over other lands. Such fragments of Apocalypse as we find in canonical books, along with other writings of the later period which are extant, shew that the idea of the Spirit was more and more diverted from schemes of aggrandisement, and concentrated upon the elevation of religion. Contact with foreign (chiefly Alexandrian) thought created an atmosphere fitted to encourage less national prejudices. The thinkers of Greece and Rome burst in on the travelled Jew, and gradually the Spirit became more and more a reversion to the semi-pantheistic idea. In one important respect it was a return to the primitive conception; the Logos or Word of God seemed to give to the lettered Jew a certain standing in the world of thought superior to the old Hebrew idea. The Spirit, on the new view, was a power invisible, realising its conquests not in physical force but in faith, in illumination of the soul, and in passive virtues. It was out of such

a crisis that the Fourth Gospel came, and the Christ Himself had been born amid a general atmosphere of apocalyptic expectation. He was indeed the Word (Logos) made flesh. He was the embodiment of that Divine Reason which was everywhere being sought and awaited amid a world of things seemingly irrational. He was the representative of the eternal and unseen. No man had seen God at any time, but the Only Begotten of the Father had revealed Him. Out of such a conception, it seemed, the salvation of the world might be attained. By its means men might at last acquire and bear the " image of the heavenly."

It will be seen from these remarks that the Fourth Gospel is regarded, here, as being in a sense the summing-up of a very long process of thought. It will therefore become naturally the most important storehouse of Biblical material in reference to the Holy Spirit. But such a conclusion does no real injustice to the older literature, whether in the Old Testament or in the inter-canonical period. Both of these sources have sometimes been treated in a manner unworthy of their value and un-

satisfactory from the standpoint of the science of Religion. Apart even from questions of inspiration and authority, it is a necessity to-day to recognise the evolution in the Scriptures of a religious theory of the first rank—that, namely, which testifies to the universal prevalence of the Spiritual within human experience. Such a line of historical study and interpretation has no doubt been equally neglected in recent doctrinal works in regard to the Person of Christ. Any one who compares the older monographs on that subject with recent treatises may notice at once the changed method which places a barrier between the Old Testament and the New. Messianic prophecy no longer fills the space which it used to secure. But in dealing with the Holy Spirit, the newer methods may ultimately offer some repayment; for they start from a general human belief in Spirit. Thus the pages of ancient Scripture are being traversed anew in order to trace the growth of the general sense of this unseen spiritual force into the remarkable form which it assumes in Old Testament prophecy and in the pages of great Apocalypse; until it emerges in the

Fourth Gospel into definite and almost dogmatic forms.

It is, of course, recognised that in Old Testament writings the Spirit is often indicated in highly materialistic ways. It was the breath of God ; it was the voice of the storm ; it was the vital energy of a Samson ; it was the hurricane which rapt the prophet from one place to another, or the fiery chariot which drove him upward into the heavens. It was poured out upon those who were inspired, as if it were a liquid. Such phrases present no insuperable difficulty to the student of historical religion. Language in sacred things is always unequal to its theme. Yet, amid such early struggles for expression, the real effort can be seen, to conceive a power which is ethereal and transcendent. Hebrew thought at its best scorned a purely physical presentation of that which is divine. Its very confusions, as in speaking of evil spirits used by God, are pathetic testimony to the struggle of early thought to keep the entire spiritual region as God's monopoly. It is, after all, the same perplexity which still meets the religious thinker when he encounters the problem

of evil in a universe assumed to be God's own; it may even lead him to deny any real existence to the forces of wickedness —a remedy perhaps seen in some Hebrew phrases, which speak of sin as "vanity." But, recognising fully this ancient problem of evil spirits, we still find in the Old Testament a dominant note of faith that there is a Spirit of God which must always be paramount, and must always secure the last word in human experience and destiny.

Thus, it is that triumphant Spirit which releases and crowns the heroic warrior, priest and king. In a sense, there is in the Old Testament a *Deus ex machina*, whose all-pervading though invisible protection completes as it has guided the career of each devoted soul.

Recent investigation has brought out more clearly the fact that the New Testament idea of the Spirit is actually continuous with such vaguer outlines as have just been described. This has been well put by Dr. Irving F. Wood,[1] who observes that Hebrew supernaturalism created the Christian Spirit of God, and brought it down among men. And he ventures to

[1] *The Spirit of God in Biblical Literature*, New York, 1904.

affirm that the idea itself is more Hebraic than Greek. The Hebrew mind placed God completely out of direct touch with man. Hence in the Old Testament we find numerous intermediaries—"Sons of God," "Elohim," and finally "His Spirit." This Spirit is not simply transcendental, but operates everywhere, in Nature and upon Man. It underlies all life, but especially that of Man. The Spirit indeed is *within* Man, not outside as in Nature. This helps to explain the fact that the Old Testament Spirit is not purely religious; God may employ evil spirits. We remember how St. James rebukes the error of saying "I am tempted by God," but there is no real contradiction, and truly God "tempteth no man." The tempter is altogether apart from the Absolute Righteousness, and wears almost the aspect of a law of nature. In any case, the primitive Hebrew mind associates the Spirit of the unseen Jehovah with great human crises, or in general with the "Unusual."

The primitive idea grew up through prophecy, and the prophet had his message through the inbreathing of the Spirit. Jehovah's breath was in this breathing

world, and it was beyond human creation. He made " the winds His Ministers."

The Exile brought to the Hebrew a keener sense of the need of God ; but He was still remote, and even His Name could not be uttered. Hence the religious Hebrew relied more than ever on the Spirit. On the eve of Christ the sentence was still true—" No man hath seen God at any time " ; but the Spirit was God immanent in Man's soul. In Nature, God was far off ; in the spiritual sphere, He was in and around Man.

In the period from 200 B.C., the use of the Spirit idea grew with intensity through personal faith, while the relation of the Spirit to physical Nature dwindled. The Messiah was figured as One who possessed the Spirit in the fullest measure. It was thus, in the Messianic conception, that the religious Hebrew survived the tendency to emphasise Divine transcendence, and gathered a fresh confidence in the ethical union between God and Man. Man was drawn into his own soul in order to find God. There he encountered a power which enabled him to endure unto the end.

Wherein did Alexandrian influence enter

upon this scene? Through the efforts of Philo to find a link between God and the World. The Unattainable God could be known through the definite entity, Spirit; but since Spirit still offered difficulties to his philosophy, Philo's watchword was not Spirit but Word (Logos). The Logos is the key to Nature; the Spirit is the key to Man. The Spirit in Platonic phrase is the "rational soul." It may be said that here is the link between the Spirit and the Scriptures. In the hardening theory of Inspiration which gained in later days an unhappy ascendancy, the Spirit became the literal author of the written page.[1]

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament material is too large to endure the limits of a single lecture. It presents also the embarrassment due to the problem of choosing the point of approach. Most naturally, the life-story of Jesus might serve to bring to light the working of the Spirit within this range. Yet in the sympathetic and finely expressed volume called *The Spiritual Pilgrimage of*

[1] I am indebted here to Dr. Irving Wood's discussion.

Jesus there is apparently a different standpoint. Few definite references to the work of the Spirit appear, although there are many phrases which imply it. Yet at the outset one is disposed to assume that, if the Spirit is the immanent force in all religion, and most of all in that of Jesus, the course of the Spirit might be tracked, if anywhere, in that perfect life. This is more than a question of phraseology, much less is it a purely controversial point. It is rather a natural evidence of the recurrent difficulty of the problem. The reality of the Spirit as a Person of the Trinity is a question which haunts the devout mind at every turn. It is indeed a pressing need which the Churches are more and more feeling that, if there be a Holy Spirit, that fact should obtain more definite expression from the most competent thinkers. The experience of Jesus, above all others, should reveal the presence of a divine power in union with His personality in the chief crises of His career. The recorded descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him is a veritable summons to the Christian mind to expect such results as we find implied in the phrase " The fruits of the Spirit."

From the first, there is evidence that our Lord's ministry moved in the atmosphere of the Spirit. The Birth narratives conform to the universal need of associating the first stirrings of life in a religious Founder with such a supernatural power. Dr. Smeaton's volume is more than forty years old, yet it strikes the expected note when it contends that the Incarnation from the outset implies the Spirit's presence. He chooses three events as manifesting the relation of the Spirit to Jesus—the Birth, the Baptism, and the Ascension.[1] No discussion of the problem of the Miraculous must hinder the devout mind from finding at each of these luminous points a signal of the presence of the Spirit, since they are the three critical points of every great career. They represent the Beginning, the Middle, and the End. They show the Entrance on Life, the Vocation to a calling, and the Triumph. It may be said that the Birth narratives sprang from a theological afterthought.[2] But the implication in them is borne out by the subsequent facts. And the heredity of Jesus demands

[1] Smeaton, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 1882, pp. 120-135.
[2] E. F. Scott, *The Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 68.

so sublime a recognition. As regards the Baptism, the descent of the Spirit is but an expression of the fullness of spiritual power, which came to Jesus in a manner so soon and so remarkably certified by all that follows. The Spirit was yet to be known as the *promise* of the Father, and that promise was in symbol claimed and fulfilled at the Jordan. And at the Ascension, the final and full manifestation came as the precursor of Pentecost.

There is here an epic completeness, almost corresponding to the Trinity of a later and dogmatic age. For there is the Spirit of the Fatherhood, the Spirit of Sonship, and the Spirit of Adoption for all believers whereby, with Jesus Himself, we may cry, Abba, Father. And these are presented at three peaks of divine power. These are the " trailing clouds of glory " which reveal to us Jesus as the vehicle of a specific divine power, originating, proclaiming, and crowning His life.

There are other striking scenes which reflect the attitude of our Lord under this remarkable spiritual influence. There is, for example, the Temptation, when, like His forerunner John the Baptist, He sought

the solitude of the desert, being led thither "by the Spirit." There is the message of His desert musings, the "Sermon on the Mount"; here the Beatitudes are, as it were, the texts. The first of these is significant as a spiritual keynote: "Blessed are the poor in Spirit" (τῷ πνεύματι). It is followed by the announcement of the treasures of the heavenly kingdom, all of which are spiritual treasures. There is the remarkable challenge later on—"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (St. Luke, xi. 13). This passage, like some others, has been discredited by textual critics as an instance of theological afterthought; it should run thus—"give *good gifts* to them that ask Him." But this is too easy a reading, and a well-known canon directs that the more difficult should be preferred. And after all, what diviner gift could there be than the Holy Spirit?

But above all, there are the farewell monologues in the Fourth Gospel, to which attention will be directed at a later stage.

If it can be said that the Spirit is "not

a primary conception with Jesus," that He was silent on this topic because He distrusted the popular excesses in Spiritualism, and reacted against the attitude of John the Baptist in that respect; such criticisms do not at any rate apply to the Fourth Gospel. To it let us now turn, as necessary to complete any fair picture of One who, led by the Spirit into the wilderness, finished His wanderings in the Garden. There, He spoke out His deepest experience. Of His utterances, even though recorded after fifty years or more, by a writer anonymous perhaps yet undeniably equal to the task, we may confidently believe that they were not things spoken for the first time. They were not even ideal conversations or addresses solely, employed as a dramatic climax in the story like the Socratic last words. They rather suggest the message of the whole Ministry of Jesus, compressed into this farewell gathering. And even more than the Pauline deliverances to which most writers yield the prior place, they give the highest personal sanction to a full doctrine of the Spirit.

THE SPIRIT IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

In appealing to St. John's Gospel first, we are met by the fact, that here, as almost always, the preference among scholars is for Paul. It may in passing be questioned whether that preference is shared by the ordinary Christian reader. Bishop Gore, though manifestly attracted by the Johannine material and regarding it as a needful supplement to the Synoptics, admits that it was Paul who framed the actual "theology of the Spirit," just as he framed "the theology of the Person of Christ." And Dr. Gore tries to persuade himself that there is really no difference between the two apostles; they have at any rate an identical aim, to show that the Spirit's work is ethical rather than emotional.[1]

But religion and theology are not identical, and there may be doubts whether the latter or more reflective process always or entirely does justice to profound and unusual experience. At any rate, the Fourth Gospel, and the temperament disclosed in Johannine writings generally, seem to speak the language of simple faith more convinc-

[1] Gore, *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, pp. 112-117.

ingly. The phraseology itself seems to me to come touchingly near to that of the undogmatic believer, as for instance in chapter xiv., so often asked for and repeated at Christian deathbeds. It is John, not Paul, whom the dying hear most willingly. The seeming profundity of the former is often exaggerated; it is really, perhaps, the depth of the still pool which nevertheless reveals to the eye its own clearness. It may be true that in parts we find traces of current philosophical thought; the "Word" may represent Alexandrian ideas of the Logos, although the "Word of the Lord" is surely Hebrew of the Hebrews; but who would sacrifice the prologue of this Gospel on account of a faint echo from Plato? The late Dr. Rashdall [1] makes much of the "Logos Theology" which grew to such bulk in later ages of the Church; but at this early stage we are not bound to academic deliverances in approaching a gospel like this. Sufficient for us that the compiler of it, in his majestic prelude, declares that "the Word was made flesh," and that the Spirit of God brooded on the Man of Nazareth,

[1] Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, p. 446 *sqq.*

as it brooded on the primeval chaos before God's Word was spoken—"Let there be light." Indeed, this Johannine prologue takes our minds back to the Creation Record rather than to Greek philosophy. It suggests a New Creation, in which the Spirit has a foremost part to play. It invests human life anew with a spiritual atmosphere.

Let us discard the assumption that the Fourth Gospel is a third-rate essay in philosophy, and venture to read it as a transcript, from a consummate Christian hand, of the Mind of Christ. Here at any rate is matter enough about the Spirit. It comes in a form which suggests reality, and is confirmatory of the scattered *logia* of the Synoptics. It has evident marks of intimacy with our Lord's ways of thinking and speaking, as they passed through the mind of a disciple (or disciples) exceptionally sympathetic, responsive, and of tenacious memory. Here, if anywhere, the Spirit may be expected to become self-revealing. Even a rigorous critic, who affirms that the Synoptics contain practically no mention of the Spirit, may be offered the Fourth Gospel as a deliberate

supplement and corrective. At all events, the remarkable omissions in St. John's narrative seem proof positive that the writer had some design of "painting in" the blank spaces of the more popular tradition.

At the outset, the Baptist in this story certifies to the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus. This prelude is succeeded by the vivid dialogue with Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews," containing a declaration of the "New Birth," as figured in baptism itself. There we find the short phrase "Water and the Spirit," which recalls the scene at the Jordan. The entrance into the New Life is thus associated with the Spirit, like the coming of the new world out of chaos. Follows almost at once a second dialogue, not any longer with a "ruler of the Jews," but with a Samaritan villager, a woman, to whom, as if in defiance of Jewish caste and social prejudice, Jesus makes the astonishing anouncement —"God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." It is almost an anticipation of the later reference to that Spirit who shall lead men into all truth.

It is no abrupt transition which almost at once places miracles of help and healing amid these discussions. Such miracles are indeed scattered over the Johannine pages, and all Christendom has associated them with a spiritual meaning and a spiritual accompaniment. For the Spirit is indeed New Birth and New Life. He Himself is "living Bread which came down from heaven," and which He gives when He gives Himself. Those who receive Him absorb lasting spiritual life, for "it is the Spirit which quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

Not without cause does He disclose His oneness with the Father while thus proclaiming a spiritual life in a spiritual world. "I and the Father are One" was described by a great missionary, Dr. Clement Scott, as the key to all His teaching. But it was a oneness in the Spirit, through whom He taught and healed and offered life.

With Life on his lips, He had to meet the terrible test of Death, when Lazarus was stricken. And amid his very tears he uttered the great cry wrung from Him—"I am the Resurrection and the Life." Even as He flung that challenge and de-

fiance, He felt in His soul the troubled sense of His own near struggle with the last enemy. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?" [1]

Is it a forced exegesis to say that the Spirit who rested upon Him at His birth; who moved Him at His baptism with the sense of "the travail of His soul"; who inspired Him to go about "doing good, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people"; who nerved Him at the last to offer all He had, "His very flesh and blood," to the Apostolic band as they reclined around Him at the Supper; that it was this same Spirit who led Him almost imperceptibly into the last discourses? Here, as on a deathbed, He laid bare His heart. And on it we seem to find the impress of the Holy Spirit.

In these sayings of Jesus at and after the Last Supper there is an intensity which the devout reader feels, and which for him guarantees the general accuracy of the recorder. The keynote perhaps is our Lord's word *Trouble*: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?" Peter

[1] The whole narrative may be followed in St. John, chaps. xi. and xii. The final quotation is in chap. xii. 27.

flames out—" I will lay down my life for thee ! " Jesus almost mechanically (if one must not even say contemptuously) ignores the interruption, and proceeds with His monologue—" Let not your heart be troubled." Here is the keynote, and He goes on to develop the theme as if it ran thus—" Trouble ! Why, then, I will pray my Father, and He shall send you another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of Truth."

Comforter is Paraclete in the Greek. And Paraclete means one who comforts, exhorts, cheers. A well-known writer rather oddly thinks that we should always say Paraclete and not Comforter, because the Greek word is more fruitful in meaning. One of its other meanings is Advocate, a shade of meaning familiar to piety, but lacking in warmth and insight, because it summons up the picture of a law-court and is a reminder of the " fierce accuser " of a cherished hymn. But at this moment Jesus was not thinking of an advocate with the Father, but of a sympathetic friend at the side of one bereaved. Another shade of meaning is Supporter or Encourager, but that is narrower and more mundane than our Lord intended. *Comforter* is

surely the right word for people in such trouble as Jesus shared with His small society at this crisis. How did the case really stand? Surely thus — Jesus had up till now been their Comforter; was He not even at that moment doing His utmost to comfort them? But even He was in need of comfort, for His soul too was troubled, and words almost failed Him. We have sought our evidence of the Holy Spirit from Jesus Himself; there then is proof that He knew by experience the comfort of the Spirit. And He says—"I will send you Another Comforter. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." [1]

But how, it may be asked, can these sayings be harmonised? Another Comforter and yet the same! No one pretends that the doctrine of the Spirit is free from problems, and doubtless here is one—that Jesus should say "I will send," or, again, "the Father will send," "will give you"; and this after He had said "I will come myself." Ingenuity is out of place amid statements so simply phrased yet so profoundly challenging, most of all that sort of cheap ingenuity which assumes an in-

[1] St. John xiv. 16; also verse 18.

correct or unconnected report. In face of the natural perplexity of the record, may it not be suggested that we are here faced by the haunting question of the Trinity ?

Not, indeed, as a full-grown dogma ; but as something involved in the consciousness of Jesus ? Is it not *thus* that One must speak who was Himself conscious of His oneness with the Father, so that what the Father sends for Comfort the Son also sends, and what the Father gives is given through the Son ? In such unparalleled circumstances, and because of the facts of His own being, Jesus can even say, " I will come back Myself." " I will come as the Comforter ; for He whom the Father and I will send is My Spirit." If truly there is much here which is perplexing, is it not perhaps because in Jesus Christ we encounter a self-consciousness which baffles though surely it never repels human interpretation ?

That there is at this point a mystical element in our Saviour's language cannot be doubted. Complete absorption in the Divine, suggesting later views of the unity of the Three in each divine Person, may give some help to our appreciation of such

phrases as have been quoted. St. Paul at a later day said: "Henceforth it is no more I that live; but Christ liveth in me." And he several times distinguished, on this ground, things which were his unaided opinion, from others which were Christ's own. Did not Jesus also more than once speak with the Creator's own voice and power? In a region like this of profound mystery, how shall we satisfy our minds by the utmost stretch of ingenious conjecture? But in our faith there is more than a demand for intellectual satisfaction. There is here room for the mystic's love and adoration, as there is also for the Pauline confession—"Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

It has lately been asserted that the Fourth Gospel is so animated by the idea of the Logos, the Revealer of truth, that the author assigns to the Comforter but one function, viz. that of Revelation. He is to come as the Spirit of Truth. But every reader knows that the Spirit in these chapters of the Gospel presents several other aspects. At least five such may be discerned without difficulty.

The foremost is that of Paraclete (St. John xiv. 16, 26; and xvi. 7).

A second is the office of Teacher (xiv. 26)—"He shall teach you"; and, "He shall bring to remembrance all My sayings."

A third is Witness (xv. 26)—"He shall testify of Me."

A fourth is Judge (xvi. 8)—"He will *convict* the world."

And a fifth is Guide (xvi. 13)—"He will guide you into all truth."

There is material for a whole treatise in such significant phrases. But that the chief office is not so much one of Revelation as of Consolation seems to be suggested in the closing words. *Trouble* was the key-note; now, it is the last phrase of the theme—"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Not the least important factor in our Lord's experience, as pictured in the Fourth Gospel in His own words, is the light reflected on two points which in later ages have continued to exercise the theological mind. They are also so essential to the present undertaking that they cannot be neglected even at this early stage, or indeed

at any stage of the history of the Spirit doctrine.

The first point is the question involved in the much discussed term, Person. Are we to approach the divine Comforter as having Personality? So far as the language of this Gospel goes, an affirmative answer seems to be unavoidable. Reference has already been made to the compulsion which rests on Jesus to use even perplexing forms of expression in conveying to His Apostles the announcement of the advent of the Comforter. "I will pray my Father, and He shall give you another Comforter" . . . "the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name" . . . "the Comforter—whom I will send unto you from the Father" . . . "the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father" . . . "if I depart, I will send Him unto you"—it is not thus that men speak of a mere emotion or belief, but rather of a personal being. In this Gospel there is never any hesitation in the use of the personal pronoun, although some to-day so commonly use the impersonal pronoun. The thoughtful author of a notable volume [1]

[1] Dr. W. L. Walker in his vol. on *The Spirit and the Incarnation*.

apologises somewhat for falling into that growing practice, on the ground that he desires to avoid the appearance of Tritheism, that the Spirit is with us *in Christ* and not separately, and that the pronoun *it* expresses something grander than the pronoun *He*. It is difficult to follow this reasoning, even although it may seem to be supported by some passages in St. Paul. But it has been questioned, no doubt, whether Paul really teaches the Personality of the Spirit.

If Jesus had said merely, "I will not leave you Comfortless; I will come unto you," no question of this kind would be likely to arise, though of course what He really said was, "I will not leave you orphans" (xiv. 18). But His remarkable accumulation of epithets can have only one explanation. The Father is to give or send. The Son is to send from the Father. The sending is to be "in *my* name"—a phrase tantamount to saying "in my room or stead." If the Son departs, He will send the Comforter. Then comes, amid this, the astonishing phrase—"I will come unto you." What can exclude the inference that the Spirit is to come as the representative

alike of the Father and the Son? Even the difficult clause, "I will come unto you," must be read in the sense of that which precedes—"I will not leave you *comfortless* (orphans)." The suggestiveness of the word orphans is irresistible, especially to the Hebrew mind, so steeped in the piety which led St. James to define Pure Religion before God and the Father as consisting, first of all, in the care and comfort of the fatherless. If this be unduly fanciful, at least it will not be denied that, throughout, our Lord attributes personal offices to the Comforter: He is to teach, to testify, to judge, to guide. Never was personality more emphatically stated.

The second point which has given the thinkers of the Church even greater concern is as to the source of the Spirit; is the Spirit sent from the Father alone as Supreme, or does He "proceed" from the Father *and the Son*? Again, it seems imperative to interpret the terms used by Jesus as expressing a joint action by the Father and the Son. The Father sends, but so also does the Son. The Comforter "proceedeth from the Father," yet is the promised agent of the Son. The under-

lying thought is perhaps to be detected in St. John xvi. 15—"All things which the Father hath are Mine." The Western decision was justified in declaring that the formula must be—"Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*)."

These two points will arise at later stages.

THE SPIRIT IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES

If John the Divine has been placed first, it is because his thoughts on the Holy Spirit show a simplicity combined with a depth which is far less evident in the Pauline methods. There can be nothing, not even Paulinism, which justly deserves precedence to the teaching of Jesus. And that is what is offered in the Johannine reports. Yet it is not questioned that in St. Paul we encounter the immediate sources of general dogmatic belief in reference to the Spirit. But the disparagement of John's Gospel has not always been just.

For example, it has been suggested that John "reads back" into the mind of Jesus as conceived by Paul. But no less Pauline work can be imagined. It has been said

also that John knows no Spirit until Jesus is dead ; the Spirit to him is a posthumous gift from the Logos, and is based on the Pauline antinomy of Flesh and Spirit. His idea of the Twice-Born (of " Water and the Spirit ") is alleged to be borrowed from St. Paul. John, it has been said, fails to preserve the distinction between the Spirit and Jesus ; this has also been charged against Paul. John emphasises knowledge (γνώσις) ; Paul emphasises New Birth ; yet we note that, to John, to " know " means to " live."

The attempt to claim the Fourth Gospel as dominantly Pauline is enterprising but ineffective. A rapid glance at the Pauline conception seems to place this beyond reasonable doubt.

Paul's antinomy of the Flesh and the Spirit is largely absent from the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus appears as offering His " flesh and blood " for the redemption of men. The theory of the transformation of the flesh as by a real and almost physical change, " from glory to glory," is intensely Pauline. The theory of the " two bodies," the psychical and the pneumatical, is Pauline. The emphasis on Baptism as

dependent on the gift of the Spirit marks another distinction. The emphasis on Revelation or Illumination as the special office of the Spirit owes much to St. Paul, while in John there are other offices associated with the Spirit.[1]

Above all, the personality of the Spirit is not always set forth in St. Paul with absolute clearness; he frequently speaks of the "Spirit of Christ"; he even says—"Now the Lord is that Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 17). Christ is practically all in all.

It has been alleged also that the Fourth Gospel is steeped in the idea, entirely Hebraic, that God is transcendent; while Paul says, "God was in Christ," and God has thus definitely become immanent. John says, "No man hath seen God at any time"; Paul never lets go his own vision at Damascus, and to him, step by step, Christ becomes very God, the agent of Creation, in whom all things stand fast. No doubt, both writers were from their Jewish education possessed by a sense that God is far off, approachable only by intermediaries. In Paul, however, writing at a much earlier date than the author of the

[1] See above, p. 30.

Fourth Gospel, there are more definite traces of the Hebrew prejudice for a transcendent God, especially in certain doctrinal expressions. He would not henceforth know Christ "after the flesh"; for him, Christ was God. And even the ambiguity of the sentence, "Now the Lord is that Spirit," may perhaps arise from the Hebrew instinct which made the very name of God a secret, and jealously safeguarded the unity of the Creator.

Yet the charge of Hellenising has been brought against St. Paul. It is alleged that there are two powerful influences which moved him from Greek thought—the idea of the Holy Spirit in a mystical sense, and the idea of redemption by a complete change of nature. But the first of these is surely to be found in striking Old Testament phrases. The second appears in the Johannine report of sayings of Jesus. A similar remark will apply probably to the suggestion that Paul's notion of the "New Creature" is an altogether novel conception of religion, dependent on fellowship with God. This was already an element in Stoic religion, for the Stoic sought identification with the

"Soul of the World." The Stoic Soul or Spirit, however, was Reason or Wisdom, while St. Paul's conception of the Spirit is hardly ever distinguished as Reason, though he speaks at times of the "Mind of Christ" (νοῦς). The Stoic was practically a materialist, the Hebrew never. On the contrary, the Hebrew in Paul rejects naturalism and appeals to a spiritual medium, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. ii. 13).

The alleged antinomy in Pauline thought between the Flesh and the Spirit is not, however, to be interpreted too literally. For the flesh to him seems to be a substance living, sensitive, and capable of Redemption. It is, so to speak, the film upon which the Divine Spirit records the "image of the heavenly." He plainly intimates the relation between the Flesh and the Spirit as one not of mere hopeless antagonism, but as permitting a process of Redemption, which has power to modify and recreate the Flesh. The crown of a Christian life is to be "changed into the same image" (2 Cor. iii. 18). "From henceforth," he says, "let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord

Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17). His earlier idea of the Second Coming is seen in the phrase, "We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed."

The vital principle throughout all this is the Spirit. The Spirit works by a process of Faith, in which all life is idealised, which yields even in the bodily life an "earnest" or pledge of the Spirit. This will change even our shamed flesh, and through the indwelling Christ assure us of immortality. Yet there is here no harsh asceticism such as oriental cults have often required of their adherents or initiates. Paul no doubt "keeps under his body," but he does not therefore deny its glory as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, for him, cleanliness is next to godliness; nor need we treat this maxim as a mere dictum of the Mysteries. In Baptism he sees more than outward bathing or washing with water; there is also a certain "drinking into" the soul, and it is the Spirit that is thus ministered (1 Cor. xii. 13). It is more than a bodily cleanliness; it is allied, comes "next to," godliness or piety. That important distinction overrides his customary contrast between the Spirit and the Flesh.

For here the flesh itself gives way to Faith, one of Paul's chief symbols. Nevertheless there is nothing "magical" in Baptism itself, for there may be a baptism which is never fertilised by spiritual experience. The Spirit may be "quenched." It is the baptism of the sanctifying Spirit which alone counts.

But the Flesh is not the only antithesis to the Spirit; Paul contrasts also with the Spirit another factor in man's life, the Law. Perhaps we may say that Flesh and Law were to him kindred difficulties in the moral life. If the Flesh gave him trouble and was even as a thorn which made him morally lame, the Law also brought him his knowledge of sin. But after all these were very much akin to each other. For he finds in his "members" (*i.e.* in the Flesh) a law warring against his mind. Who shall deliver him from this dead or diseased body? Surely that Spirit who renews the mind so that it becomes dominant over the Flesh, and he can say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"; "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Thus it is the Spirit of Christ who ultimately restores harmony, so that

he might in a new sense exclaim, " Yet in my flesh shall I see God."

But how can this moral triumph be secured ? It is almost a metempsychosis, to use the Platonic term. Jesus had always spoken of Eternal Life, and once He declared that " this is Life Eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Undoubtedly, this knowledge is claimed by Paul. At any rate, he claimed to have " received of the Lord " that which he delivered to his hearers. But this is something different from a Gnostic secret or a special sacred myth. If he says, " We speak wisdom among them that are perfect," he is but echoing Christ Himself, who urged His disciples to be " perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect." To conclude that Paul claimed to impart a special " metaphysic of the Spirit," a secret or esoteric mythology, is to misrepresent his obvious attitude to all mythologies. As a Hebrew he would instinctively suspect the pretentious Mysteries of which his age was full. No doubt he used illustrations and terms associated with current Mysteries, and our own day is showing a tendency to go further by

making the sacraments something like rites of special initiation, safeguarded by a monopoly of priests. But the knowledge of the Spirit was to him for all men. He had once for all broken the barriers of privilege when he turned to the Gentiles, and made light of circumcision. It is true that he maintained that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned, and he declares that "no one knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11). But along with that he teaches that the divine Spirit is freely bestowed. There is no view more unjust to St. Paul than that which suggests that the Christian Faith was technically a "Mystery." The Holy Spirit is to him no monopoly of the few, but a universal atmosphere of the higher life.

When we gather together the leading Pauline dicta concerning the Spirit, we find that he is in the direct line of most ancient belief among his countrymen in the Spirit of God. With the Old Testament belief he combines the more recent faith in a Messiah, upon whom the Spirit rested above measure. That promised Saviour is, to Paul, Jesus Christ; on Him

alone did the Spirit thus immeasurably abide. This is therefore *par excellence* the "Spirit of Christ." Shall we, following Paul, say that the Spirit *is* Christ? There is practically only one authentic utterance of Paul which plainly suggests such a conclusion. It is no doubt crucial. In 2 Cor. iii. 17 he writes, "The Lord is that Spirit." A tendency plainly exists to take this isolated passage as warrant for ignoring the truth known as the "personality of the Spirit." That has already been referred to. It has gained on many minds because of the difficulty of expressing a religious experience which doubtless consists in its essence in "knowing Christ" and living the life of Christ. Dr. Denney suggests that Paul escaped the difficulty because he never knew Jesus as a living person on earth, and therefore from the first confronted only His Spirit. This will no doubt explain much in Pauline writings. Yet even there we cannot produce more than one passage, as just quoted. Dr. Denney even says, "We can think of no presence of the Spirit except the spiritual presence of Christ," and "there is no justification . . . for representing the Spirit as a third

person in the same sense as God and Christ." [1] The judgment of scholars, however, will convince most men that Paul did not deliberately identify the Spirit with Christ. In any case, he had no cause to challenge the contact of the Spirit with human personality. We cannot readily believe that Paul's own personality could have arisen under an impersonal influence.

There are, of course, those who will say that there is really no need and no room for a personal Spirit, and that Christ is all-in-all to the believer. The popular hymn readily occurs :—

> "Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
> More than all in Thee I find."
>
> *Hymnary*, 193.

But Paul at least met a persistent prior tradition; he even said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts"; and these were the *Charismata* or gifts of the Spirit. Does he then use the vocabulary of the Spirit in the conventional way so common to-day? It was too early in Christian development to assume this. Were there not those in that period who had never heard of the Spirit? On the other hand, the narrative

[1] Denney, *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 188 *sqq.*

of the Acts of the Apostles in early chapters emphasises the special gift of the Holy Ghost to converts. And the risen Jesus Himself had said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," thus precisely intimating a personal distinction between Himself and that divine influence.

The consequences of denial of the Personality of the Spirit are serious. Dr. Ernest F. Scott has argued that in the mystical experience of Paul "the historical Christ becomes a universal presence, dwelling in the hearts of men; while the Spirit ceases to be a vague supernatural principle, and is one, in the last resort, with Christ." [1] It is difficult to distinguish between this universal presence and the vague supernatural principle. But the suggestion is irresistible that, if the Spirit should to-day become for us thus vague, the Presence of Christ Himself could hardly escape a similar fate. It also would become "one in the last resort with God." This in fact is the attitude of some prominent thinkers. On the other hand, the growth of what may be called a "Jesus Only" Religion can be traced in certain types of devotion and

[1] E. F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

of theology to-day. The spread of the Ritschlian doctrine that Jesus has for us "the value of God" makes such a result intelligible. But it divorces doctrine from philosophy, and it reduces the Church to a sect.

I

THE History of Doctrine throughout the Ancient Church may well suggest the paradoxical conclusion that the heretic of one epoch is sometimes the orthodox teacher of the next. For three at least of the teachers in this early period were duly condemned heretics—Montanus, Tertullian, and Origen. All of them were held to have left the straight path in their teaching on the Spirit. This may have arisen partly because of the stress laid by general opinion on the factor of Teaching as distinguished from "gifts." Paul himself is perhaps the chief upholder of the ethical or teaching function. "Covet earnestly the best gifts" (*Charismata*); "but," he adds, "I shew unto you a more excellent way." It was the way of edification, not of emotion, still less of extravagant ecstasy. It is true that he also made light of particular teachers —"Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but

teachers by whom ye believed?" If the reality of the Spirit is to be cherished, teaching alone must not be made the only test of godliness. It is after all "the Spirit which quickeneth." Moreover, the end of Religion is to seek Fellowship. Of the three good wishes of our Benediction, the final wish is that the κοινώνια or fellowship of the Holy Ghost may be with us. The getting together of even two or three, however humble, brings along with it a Grace which is Christ's, and a Love which is God's own.

The literature of the Spirit, viewed from the standpoint of doctrine, is singularly scanty immediately after the Apostolic age. Paul himself dropped into a strange silence, and the coming of divisions (*schismata*) may help to explain that; he had latterly pleaded pathetically for a "simplicity that is in Christ"; instead, came controversy. Clement of Rome knew Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, yet he lacks recognition of those ethical aspects for which that apostle interceded. The tone of the martyred Ignatius had already become imperious. To him the Church is everything, and the Spirit is but an adjunct;

it is, as he figures it, the "rope" by which the stones are hauled up to build the Temple. In the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" there is a more primitive note, for "prophets" are still extant, with "gifts" as their commission to teach. Yet even for such gifted teachers there is a note of disparagement in the regulation that they must not spend more than three days, ordinarily, in each local church. At length, in the allegory of Hermas, something like a return to romance appears; his tale of the *Shepherd* comes from one whose brother was Pope, but it is not a Pope's story. The Spirit, it teaches, alone accredits the prophet. And the Spirit is a "cheerful" Spirit. "Clothe thyself," he says, "therefore, with a cheerful Spirit." In this he, among the first, strikes the note of the *Mens sana in corpore sano* which is found in the Pseudo-Clement. This last teaches that our very flesh is an antitype or duplicate of the Spirit; we must not soil our flesh, else we shall lose the original. It is an echo of St. Paul—"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" It echoes also a yet grander voice—"The kingdom of heaven is within you."

In the Greek Apologists, the scholarly defenders of the new Faith, we are among thinkers. The philosophic mind of Justin the Martyr naturally sought to trace the knowledge of God and of His Son through a spiritual way; and that meant for him the way of Plato. In a spiritual world, populated by ideas, men must seek to ascend to the highest Idea of all, and to reach through Christ the divine Spirit. But Tatian scorned Platonism, and insisted that it is the Spirit alone who gives to man immortality. He is God's deputy within the soul, although He is there also as the messenger and servant of the Christ. On the other hand, it was Platonism which guided Athenagoras to a clear-cut theory, that God's Son is the Logos or Word, whose outflow or effluence is the Spirit. It is Athenagoras who first, about the end of the second century, decisively states a Trinity. In this threefold Divine Movement, the Spirit represents definitely the source of inspiration. He breathed into the prophets like a flute-player.

Then came upon the Church the strange movement of Gnosticism, developing and peopling a world of invisible beings, coming

forth from the Supreme God. For, to Gnosticism, God is literally the fullness (*pleroma*) of all. All being is graduated downwards from Him. Strange myths were coined to show how God marvellously came into touch at last. Romances appeared, resembling works of fiction, to explain the long intricate process. Marcion, rejecting the Fourth Gospel and its simple teaching, fell back on Paul. Some of Marcion's followers even hailed their leader as the "Other Paraclete" promised by Christ. And thus we reach the real founder of a purely romantic interpretation—Montanus. For the Montanists, the Spirit *par excellence* was that of the Fourth Gospel, the constant inspiration of the Church, which is the evidence of His abiding presence. Montanism secured as its greatest trophy the adherence of Tertullian, who first used the Latin word Trinitas; yet in the Church's decrees both he and Montanus are written down as heretics. No doubt, he developed what is the haunting vice of emotionalism, spiritual pride. To him, the orthodox were "psychics," people of an earthly mind; he and his alone were "pneumatics," people of a

spiritual mind. Yet Montanism, still awaiting justice, left a deep mark on subsequent religious experience. One thing may surely be traced to it, the constant emergence of those emotional forces which are at any rate a symptom of reviving faith in the unseen.

Of that famous Gallican Father, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, it has been said that if the Gnostics were the first deliberate theologians, then Irenaeus was their first critic. For him, the Spirit spake, as of old, through the prophets, but not in a merely mortal voice; for He is the Divine Wisdom of Proverbs. He is the Spirit of Creation; to Him man owes all that the world offers to human eyes and brain. Of conspicuous value is his early statement that the Son and the Spirit are to be distinguished one from the other, although also he often speaks of the "Spirit of God." It is Irenaeus who says, "The Father anointed, the Son was anointed, the Spirit was the Unction." "It was not," he adds, "the Christ who, at the baptism, descended on Jesus, nor is the Christ one person and Jesus another; but the Word of God took flesh, and was anointed by the Father with the Spirit." It is a sentence which is

pregnant with far-off decisions concerning the relations within the Trinity. It is of peculiar value at the present time, when attempts are at intervals made to create a harsh distinction between Jesus and Christ, and to dispose of the Spirit as an "Influence," and nothing more. Irenaeus also asserts a certain *headship* of the Spirit over Christians, calling it *dominatio*, obviously based on the function which is implied in the words—"He shall *guide* you into all truth." It implies, however, more than guidance. It suggests in the term *domination* a distinct control by the divine Power of Truth over Christian minds. Most notable of all, in view of the maxim of Cyprian later on (that "where the Bishop is, there is the Church"), we have the affirmation of Irenaeus that, "*where the Church is, there is also the Spirit, and where* the Spirit is, there is also the Church and all grace; for the Spirit is truth." Moreover, in spite of this thorough doctrine of spirituality, he avoids any suspicion of "emanation," the error of the Gnostic. He does not use even the term, now allowed, *processio*; but he declares that the Spirit is inherent in God's life, just as

the Son is. "The Spirit operates," he says; "the Son administers; the Father approves."

Such terms inevitably raised the outcry, that God's supremacy (known as *monarchia*) was invaded, and protests arose. Oddly enough, history records two unexpected antagonists, both called by the same name, Theodotus, who sought to guard the Divine Monarchy by excluding the Spirit as a Person of the Trinity. The one Theodotus, known in grave Church History as "the leather-merchant" (σκυτεύς), held that the Spirit was just Christ Himself, a conjecture now familiar in recent theology. The other Theodotus, called "the banker" or "money-changer" (τραπεζίτης), actually identified the Spirit with the high-priest Melchizedek. It was, however, Paul of Samosata who headed this section of the Anti-Spirit party, leaving a new heresy known as that of the Samosatenes. Another section has bequeathed a more formidable heresy, that of the Sabellians, to whom the Spirit, like the divine Son Himself, was but a phase of Godhead. The visible luminary in the heavens, so it was argued by them, is but one, yet it has three *modes*, Light, Heat, and Motion.

But this metaphor is an echo of paganism, deifying natural phenomena, and incurring the fallacy (a thoroughly modern one) of explaining the higher by the lower. There is, however, one unique phrase which suggests the actual union of Father and Son. It is a single word, and it is in English untranslatable. It is *υἱοπάτωρ*. It takes six of our words to express a profoundly true affirmation—"I and the Father are One."

We must return to Tertullian for a vivid illustration taken by him from the martyr-fights which St. Paul had perhaps known. Tertullian describes the martyrs as fighting in the arena, while God Himself presides, the Spirit is their trainer for the fight, and Christ is the Master who has anointed them with the Spirit and has accompanied them to the contest. It is a curious and pathetic picture. To Tertullian, a more peaceful scene is that of Baptism; there also the Spirit manifests His presence, for He broods over the water, and makes it cleansing and healing. This is a reminder of the first epoch of Creation, as well as of the picturesque New Testament story of the pool of Bethesda, visited by an angel

who "troubled" the waters. The Spirit and valid Baptism were to Tertullian inseparable. His former pupil, Cyprian, had learned well the fashion of such picturesque exegesis; for he speaks of the "birth-wave" as denoting that spiritual presence. The same Presence was associated by Cyprian with imposition of hands at baptism, though he makes a grim "exception" should the Bishop be in schism. Yet, after all, Cyprian did not trust altogether to technicalities, for he emphasises the necessity of the Spirit's work in sanctifying and quickening the believer, day by day.

When we turn now to Origen, we reach a name full of suggestions, many of them indeed condemned by ancient Church canons. In regard to our special subject, however, he is sometimes ranked next to the Scriptures themselves. Rejecting three alternatives—that the Spirit is, in glory, inferior to the Father, or that He is unbegotten, or that He is non-existent except as all being resides in the Father and the Son—he suggests that the Spirit was *made* by the Father *through* the Son, and set forth as a Being in honour above all created things. The interest here, for later dis-

cussions, lies in this early usage of the phrase *through the Son.* Origen indeed formulated with precision a theory which involved a step in advance, and which must be encountered to the present day, in one form or another. He recognises God the Father as supreme Creator of All —of the Son by the mode of "begetting," and of the Spirit by way of something different but *not less than divine.* The Spirit's office is to be the medium or minister of Grace (*charismata*) from God, a grace transmitted from Christ, and operating in substance according to the Spirit (κατὰ τὸ Πνεῦμα Ἅγίον). Perhaps we may date from Origen the many battles of the prepositions. In his careful attempt to reach exact expression, he uses ἀπὸ for God the Father, ὑπὸ for God the Son, and κατὰ for the Spirit. That is, he regards God as the Source, Christ as the Agent, and the Spirit as the Medium. Here he founds largely on St. John xvi. 15—"He (the Spirit) shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" —the saying of Jesus Himself. One question at any rate he settles—the Spirit is not an "emanation." It is true he was charged with "Subordinationism," contra-

dicting the equality in power and glory of Father, Son, and Spirit. But what he truly intended was to save the Fatherhood by declaring that the Spirit is (unlike the Son) *not* begotten. Nevertheless he endeavours to assert that the Spirit is divine in a sense peculiar to Godhead. He at any rate refused to rest content with "modalism." By his theories, he killed for ever the idea of a merely metaphorical Trinity. The Sabellian notion of three "modes" of revelation of the one God seemed to him indeed a gross example of what he called "lack of insight"—a euphemism perhaps for hardness of heart. Yet he fell under the odium of Tritheism, an instance, among many, then and ever since, of the risk attending the most ingenious of conjectures on so difficult a subject.

II

The first of the great Councils of the Church, dealing with the widespread Arian theory, registered its chief decision without special reference to the Spirit, adding to its Creed (the original Nicene Creed) only these laconic words—"And (we believe)

in the Holy Spirit." But Arianism was so strong that it had a majority in a subsequent Council (at Antioch, A.D. 339). It did two things strangely inconsistent: it deleted from the Nicene Creed the vital *homoousion*, and it added the significant clause—"The Holy Spirit is really Holy Spirit, the names of the Persons being settled not as mere names or as negligible, but as intimating the proper hypostasis (person), rank, and glory of each Person." This is a curious incident. The omission of *homoousios*, with the emphasis laid on the "names" as being "not mere names" or "negligible," seems almost to reflect on the Nicene Fathers for their brevity in regard to the Spirit. Is it possible that this Arian majority felt the risk of the Spirit being quenched in the glory of the Only-Begotten? At any rate, modern theology sometimes runs that risk, in its tendency to give all glory to the Son. At a later stage of the present inquiry, we shall have cause to draw attention to this symptom. In passing from it now, we may note how narrow sometimes are the partitions which divide orthodoxy from heresy. It is also ascertained that Arius himself

contended for a dissimilar substance or essence in each of the Three Persons. Practically, however, the doctrine of the Spirit was deprived of adequate prominence in the tremendous struggle centring around the Nicene Creed of A.D. 325. Arianism for a considerable time was on the crest of the wave, yet it must not be charged with neglect of the Spirit; for it emphasised what is known as the Mission of the Spirit, and even uses the term Procession, afterwards destined to find solemn approval from Trinitarian judges. Shortly stated, the position of the Arians was, that they formally recognised a Trinity, but the Three Persons were described as like (ὁμοίοι), not as identical in substance (ὁμοούσιοι).

The process of developing dogma was never more clearly laid bare than in the controversies which ensued. Nowhere did it proceed more violently than in Egypt. Athanasius was really for a long time *contra mundum*, and was thrice driven from Alexandria. It is in his romantic story that we first learn to recognise the ungainly name of the "Pneumatomachoi," or "Spirit-Fighters," given to those who challenged more or less openly the claims

of the Spirit. The Trinity was by this time accepted in its mere terms, but these "Spirit-Fighters" suggested a difference in status. To them the Third Person was not more than Chief of the ministering angels. It was a Pagan emperor who recalled Athanasius, and toleration was allowed to all who gave formal assent to the Nicene decrees. Soon, however, the attack on the Spirit was renewed, and then the Pneumatomachoi or "Spirit-Fighters" were declared to be heretics. But already that vagueness which to our day has dogged this doctrine reappeared, all the sooner because there were ascetics and devout people in the hostile ranks. Then there appeared a stricter formula, ascribing to the Three Persons "one Godhead, one power, one character, one essence." It said—"We adore the Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, as perfect in all things, in power, honour, majesty, and Godhead." The *homoousion* had triumphed, and Arians and Semi-Arians alike were overthrown. An imperial decree confined the name "Catholic" to Nicene believers. The decree came from the Emperor Theodosius, who was a Spaniard. We shall yet

have occasion to note the influence of Spanish thought on the Spirit doctrine of the West. The Council of A.D. 381 closed this stormy epoch by adding to the Nicene Creed the memorable words, "The Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified" (Constantinople, A.D. 381).

III

Thus closed confessedly the busiest and greatest era of creed-making, nor (we are sometimes told) will its chief questions ever be reopened. Yet to-day there are signs of a curious reaction in some quarters, both philosophical and theological. Philosophy has little to say of any one but God; some of the modernist writers have laid an arrest on the apotheosis of Jesus, and still more on that of the Spirit as a divine Person of the Godhead. For others, Jesus is no longer Humanity deified, but rather a Man who attained unsurpassed moral and spiritual heights. The Holy Spirit seems gradually to emerge from critical and constructive processes either as an epithet for

Christ, or as the spiritual factor in civilised consciousness, or as a divine disclosure of the value of the idea of God for religious faith, within a Church founded by Him and pervaded by His influence. Such phenomena are not altogether unaccountable. Perhaps indeed one cause of them has been the process of delimiting the spheres associated with the Trinity. This has always, in the Creeds, been a challenging and a recurrent process. To-day it threatens to become as incessant as in the Great Councils. There, its details are, in some respects, astonishing to the ordinary student of Church History. It was marked by debates and decisions which sometimes savour too much of political assemblies. Behind them we can almost discern the menace of imperial decrees; such decrees indeed almost always terminated the long dialectic of bishops and presbyters. The whole story projects on the subsequent History of Doctrine the shadow of a conception of God as being Himself an Emperor rather than a Heavenly Father, who "knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust."

Although the question of the Trinity was

officially settled, the work of Athanasius was by no means finished. His *Exposition of the Faith* contains certain outlines of a distinctive doctrine of the Third Person. In his rendering, the Spirit is not in scope and activity confined to man's immediate needs, but is represented as searching even "the depth of God." He is God's own Messenger. The message is, however, Christ's message. The doxologies of that day ascribe divine glory to the Father and to the Son, but this is expressed as Glory to the Father and to the Son "*in* or *with* the Holy Spirit." We have already noted the significance of prepositions in this archaic literature. It is part of the subtlety of the Greek language, whose flexibility is usually praised, though there are some who regret it as an occasion (if not a cause) of controversies. In other tractates Athanasius, however, declares that the Spirit could only be given *through* and *from* the Divine Son, because this is *His* Spirit. Yet is He also the Spirit of God; hence in Him we are in God and God in us. It is, finally, God's Spirit who is supplied to us. The Spirit is nevertheless the sanctifying and illuminating energy of the Son, an energy

which proceeds from the Father. The Father sends the Son; the Son in turn sends the Spirit. This is a chain which cannot be broken. In such reasonings, we see Athanasius already providing, far ahead, for the problem of the Source and the rank of the Spirit, as well as for the Personality. In a sense, he is also contending for the spiritual identity of the Three Persons.

We may regard these and similar expressions as something like experiments in doctrine. It is perhaps a dangerous expedient for us to refer, on such a topic, to the familiar lesson of Heredity. But is it not true that we see the spirit of any earthly father recurring in his descendants to the third and fourth generation? yet are they all possessed of personality. May not the human and doubtless fallible analogies of Father, Son, and Spirit be a little illuminating at such a point? But then, as Athanasius saw, we are not dealing with any ordinary case, in which human flesh and blood are concerned, but with transcendental personalities. He, however, turns from this to attempt to show that a purely psychological method is here unfit.

If the Spirit, who is declared to be not begotten, but "sent," be only an "emanation," an "influence," from the Son, then the Son can be nothing greater if equality in the Trinity is to be preserved. The Son must then Himself be an emanation from the Father. Such disastrous results discouraged a purely psychological approach. Athanasius at any rate was not in a position to frame his deliverance in psychological terms. To-day, perhaps, the facts which appear to indicate a double or treble personality may be of some little use. The vocabulary of the Fourth Century held to its own phrases, *begotten*, *proceeding*, *sent*, *given*, and the like. It was steadfast in demanding that the Son should be hailed as the Only-begotten. For the Spirit, it relied, at least in orthodox language, on such phrases as Mission, Advent, Procession, Unction. Even Sabellius may claim to-day some indulgence because he travelled (in metaphor at least) beyond such phrases, and sought his solution from physical nature. Athanasius adopted no such perilous resource, but tried to "compare spiritual things with spiritual." His final stand is taken on the principle that at any

rate neither Father nor Son nor Spirit was within the ambit of Creation.

To Athanasius is due the credit of discarding at length the endless process of experimenting with definitions, and of turning with relief to the practical aspects of the doctrine, as they offer themselves in religious experience. The Spirit, he urged, is here in human lives, not simply enthroned above. A science of the Spirit is after all inadequate unless men *have* the Spirit. The best evidence must be sought in Christian lives.

IV

Bishop Gore has observed that the formulation of the permanent doctrine was due to the Cappadocians of the Fourth Century. These were Basil and the two Gregories, the one Bishop of Nazianzus, the other Bishop of Nyssa and brother of Basil. Thus brought together, these three eminent Fathers may be held to represent a revival of interest in the teaching of Origen. The first, Basil of Cappadocia, in a treatise *De Spiritu Sancto*, argued the question of prepositions. Men were singing doxologies to the Father and the Son, and

to the Holy Spirit "*after* the Father," or even "*under* the Father and the Son." Basil contends that the correct phrase should be "*through* the Son *in* the Holy Spirit," or "*together with* the Son." The former phrases, he declares, suggest a subordination in glory of the Spirit, and yet the term "Spirit of God" or "Holy Spirit" obviously designates an equal order of Godhead. He complains of those who treat this question as one of "enumeration," first, second, and third, when the truth is that there is no such ὑπαρίθμος or "sub-numeration." All three are equal in the oneness of Godhead. But his opponents put forward the case that baptism was not infrequently conferred in the sole name of Jesus; to this he replies with the proposition, that, *whenever One Person is named, all are included, being by their nature inseparable.* If, however, it was contended that the Spirit could not claim Divine Honour and Glory, the retort is, Then why is the Spirit acknowledged as a member of the Trinity? It may be that such reasoning does not so readily move the modern man. And when Basil discusses the vexed problems, problems of language

as well as of thought, which are wrapped up in the terms οὐσία and ὑπόστασις (*being* and *substance* or *subsistence*), he encounters a real confusion of his day and of our own. Here those words are used to explain the Procession (ἐκπορεύσις) of the Spirit. The Spirit, he thinks, proceeds from the Cause of all being, but inasmuch as the Spirit is known as following after and with the Son, He is thus connected with the Son as well as with the Father. Without attempting to discuss the argument, it may be pointed out that the interest here centres in its bearing on the question of the Procession—the problem of the *Filioque*.

In Gregory of Nazianzus and the other Gregory (of Nyssa) we encounter a type of thought sharper and more defined. The Nazianzene Father attacks the critics in a fashion almost modern. They had, he declared, passed from their irreverent attitude toward the divine Son, in order to level their weapons against the Spirit. They say, "You are introducing a new and strange God." The Sadducees in their day had affirmed that there is no Holy Spirit. Greek thinkers said the Spirit is but a name for the Soul of the World, the

mind which abides in the universe. Some theologians again could not make up their minds either way, and called for a suspense of judgment. This last Gregory roundly condemns as a contemptible expedient. And he follows a decided course—he will appeal only to true Christian experience. He offers the following dilemma: the Spirit is either substantive or contingent. But if contingent, He is nothing more than an Activity. But surely every activity implies an Agent, one who acts; and Scripture clearly represents the Spirit as such, that is, as a Personal Agent. If, however, He is a Person, He must be either created, or uncreated, that is, God. There is no middle term; He cannot be half-and-half. If He is a creature, we cannot "believe" in Him, or be made perfect by Him. And if He is God, we dare not regard Him as a creature, or assign to Him any name unfitting for God. But the opponent may then argue—"If the Spirit is God, is He generate or ingenerate? For if the former, that assumes two Sons; and if ingenerate or unbegotten, then the Unity of God is destroyed; and there are two Gods." The reply of the Nazianzene has

an accent of triumph—what if we deny the major premiss? What if the Spirit is neither unbegotten nor begotten, but *proceeding* (ἐκπορευόμενος)?

It is not too much to say that Gregory Nazianzen sounds here the advance to what we know as the *Filioque* movement. But there he halts, refusing to define the Third Person, because of the mystery.

In that respect he is perhaps wiser than the other Gregory (of Nyssa), for the latter claims to offer a scientific theory based on the analogy of the breath of man's nostrils. The Spirit is the Breath of God, an hypostasis or "person" even as the Word of God. He is therefore the third essential factor in Godhead. Just as there are many men, but only one reality, Manhood, so are there Three Hypostases but only one God. God Himself is but One Operation, but One Cause; yet there is also that which arises necessarily from the idea of Cause as thus applied. The Divine Son does in this way arise from the Father, and the Divine Spirit in turn from the Son, who Himself has come from the Supreme Cause *immediately*. The Son occupies a mediating position which entitles Him to be called Only,

unique; and the Spirit also is then related to the Father "in a natural way." For all three have the same nature. The relation of Cause and Caused is in itself purely metaphysical. It has been held that this is a satisfactory theory. Shortly put, it runs thus—"The Father is Cause; the Son and Spirit are that which is caused."

V

There is always a peculiar interest attaching to men who derive from Neo-Platonism, and bring into the Christian Faith the element of Mysticism. Such was Hilary of Poitiers, whose treatise on the Trinity presents some new features as compared with his predecessors. He affirms the now historic maxim that "the Spirit is God's Gift," a proposition which recalls the great passage in St. John iii. 16—"God so loved the world that He *gave* His only Begotten Son." But there is a Union of all Three Persons in that Gift, expressed in these terms, that the Spirit derives His being from the Father AND the Son (*patre et filio auctoribus*). This is obviously a phrase of Western growth. Hilary, however, has the

mystic's delicacy of expression in dealing with this question. He feels that the Spirit is really a factor in experience, the deepest in our heart and the least logical. He thus resembles Pascal, with his maxim that the heart has its reasons, for which it can give no reason. One might say that to Hilary this is the heart-beat; we must not expect, here, exact definition. We must not demand categorical answers to such questions as, Through whom? or, Of what nature? or, To what end? This is a hint to the mere scholastics. But we may ask, What then is this mystic experience as it imposes itself on the believer? It is an experience of Illumination, of Prophecy, and of Revelation. First comes Illumination, whereby the fundamental fact of the Incarnation shines out in our mind by its own light. Second, there is Prophecy, moving us to declare the Father in the Spirit of Adoption. And third, there is Revelation, enabling us to hold fast the Faith and to give it expression.

As if giving an object-lesson here, Hilary turns to the Holy Nativity, and shows infinite delicacy in his treatment. It is a point at which some famous dogmatists

have betrayed a certain lack of fineness. In his view, the Nativity holds within it the " mystery " of the Spirit. He proceeds to develop that assumption by certain highly mystical methods. It is not possible —indeed, it would be presumptuous—to enter into details. It may only be suggested that, in declaring the part of the Mother in that amazing event, Hilary shows a courage and an insight rarely equalled in ancient doctrine.

VI

We turn now to the work of Augustine in this department. With his trained mind, he realised the difficulties of the problem of Personality, and sought to relieve if not to remove them by the fundamental principle of the Divine Unity. No one perhaps has had a deeper realisation, in religious experience as well as in philosophical thought, of the fullness of what is implied in God. If he is most frequently quoted for his saying, " Thou hast made us for Thyself," it should be remembered that the converse has its truth for Augustine as for us—" Thou hast given Thyself for us." Since, in the truth of the Incarnation,

Christians recognise God manifest in the Flesh, and since in God's Unity there are three Persons, he concluded that the Incarnation is the act of that Divine Trinity, although but One became incarnate. Thus, in Jesus, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all represented. For some of us, this daring vision of a consecrated mind may suggest a higher theory than the derelict "Kenosis." If we have Scripture for saying that the Christ emptied Himself, we have the same authority for affirming that in Him dwelt "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Augustine's view lends new meaning to the three voices of Jesus—the first speaking to the storm, the voice of the Father, "Peace, be still"; the second in the Garden, the voice of the Son, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"; and the third, the voice of the Spirit, "Into thy hands I commend my Spirit." Such a fancy would perhaps be in keeping with Augustinian mysticism.

A second and more familiar aspect of Augustine's type of thinking identifies the Spirit with the mutual Love of the Father and the Son, which in itself is a Communion of the Spirit in an unbroken Godhead. If

God is Love, surely His Love must be an *ens reale*. It must be God Himself in some ineffable but most real form. The common property of Godhood (θεότης) must include that reality of Love. That means, that the Spirit who is essential and eternal Love must be what those ages called an hypostasis or subsistence in the Divine. Accordingly, in respect of this principle of Love, Augustine expresses the Trinity as composed of Three Persons, each of whom is fully and entirely God, with the same "eternity, unchangeableness, and power." The Father is Unity, the Son is Equality, the Spirit is the "harmony," the gathering up and concentration of both—the link uniting the Father and the Son.

In his monumental treatise on the Trinity, Augustine in his old age reveals the variety of his illustrations. He distinguishes between Procession and Mission; Mission rests upon Generation as a quality peculiar to the Son, and on Procession in the Spirit. For the Spirit was sent, not generated by the Father. But if the Spirit was sent by the Father, then He was sent also from the Son, otherwise He could not be called Christ's Spirit; yet we know that

Christ said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (St. John xx. 22). The Father therefore is Source of the Spirit, but so also is the Son. Moreover, this "Gift of God," though necessarily sent in time, is also an eternal gift. The Procession is eternal, the Mission alone is in time.

"There are," says Augustine, "three persons in God and no more: One who loves Him who is from Himself; One who loves Him from whom He is; and their mutual Love." Moreover, the impress of the Three is seen in every human being—"I love," says Augustine, "myself; I am loved by myself; and there is the Love by which I love and am loved." These quotations perhaps reveal the dexterities of the schools of philosophy in which Augustine shone erewhile. His illustration of the Trinity has the same ring: "I *remember* that I have three faculties; I *understand* that I have them; I *will* to use them." These three, Augustine argues, are *Me*; not three distinct and separate entities, but in reality, One Substance, One Being.

In our day such an illustration does not carry the same force as in his, for we are

no longer permitted to speak of "Faculties." Yet the secrets of human personality, from which he sought to understand that which is divine, are still very imperfectly explored. In his own time and long afterwards, Augustine's attitude had astonishing results. And even yet, the complexity of human consciousness must, for mere sanity, be related to some conception of unifying value, organised perhaps for use in diverse directions. We can hardly as yet accept the seeming revival in some quarters of the old theory of the "bundle of sensations."

But we are not bound to Augustine's psychology any more than to his imposing theory of the City of God. His general teaching concerning the Work of the Spirit is that which still survives. What is Augustine's view of that work? The Spirit, in his analysis, is definitely realisable in the evolution of the Christian character. Regeneration through the Spirit gives a Grace which only a persistently evil life can defeat. Forgiveness of Sin comes through the Spirit, and this too can be withheld only by final impenitence. Prayer is prompted by the Spirit, and by the same way comes also Holiness. By Him we

abide in God. Holiness is not the mere literal imitation of Christ, but consists in living through Christ this life of the Spirit.

These are still, for Christendom everywhere, accepted and most blessed provisions.

VII

There is a natural transition from such utterances of Augustine to the great event signalised by a Provincial Council at Toledo, the third held there, in A.D. 589. There can hardly be a doubt that this Council felt the influence of Augustine's general teaching, more particularly in his decision concerning the eternal Procession of the Spirit. It is true that Gregory the Great supported the same view. But the chief weight lay on the Augustinian doctrine. The *Filioque* was actuated from Hippo, more than from Rome.

This Council of Toledo in 589 formally declared that "The Holy Spirit is both confessed and preached as proceeding from the Father and the Son." How came a local Synod to take so important a step? It is said that the local Council had before it an interpolated copy of the Creed of

Constantinople containing the significant words *ex patre et filio procedentem*. Did the Toletan Fathers insert this ? or, did they find it already inserted ? The charge has never been proved, but MSS. were often incorrectly transcribed. Apart from this, we must remember that the Procession from the Father in union with the Son was not a new conception, especially in the Western Church. Such a development was therefore inevitable, because it went to the root of things, and it met a recognised need. There could not be more than One Son begotten of the Father. The Spirit must accordingly be either (*a*) unbegotten though equal, hence raising a new and critical question ; or (*b*) some Power coming from both by another method. Emanation we know was out of court, for that meant Gnosticism. Sabellius had employed something resembling emanation, and confessedly that fell short of a real Trinity. Arianism made the Son a creature, and inferentially the Spirit also in the Arian theory became a creature. What saved the situation was the ancient Realism, which gave currency to the phrase " the same *in substance*."

Obviously, the Church was throughout faced by problems then, and still, beyond perfect expression. But the central belief was *there*. Those who to-day seem to depersonalise the Spirit are in fact confronted by an invincible demand for personality ; if successful, they must also perhaps depersonalise the Son of God. Throughout these centuries there has been a constant search for an historical embodiment of the Spirit. How far can God be interpreted on lines of human personality ? There remains the appeal to the Scriptures and to Religious Experience. Both of these have survived long controversial ages. Both will in time bring to light more and more illuminating categories for the Church's creed.

I. THE MEDIAEVAL MIND

In passing from the Ancient Church into the spacious regions of the Mediaeval, we cannot and must not overlook the impressiveness of the new territory. To most people Mediaevalism suggests vastness and the labour of many minds. It brings also a sense of being as it were underground in a mine, and of dim lights in long galleries. Modern scholarship, however, is more and more illuminating those shadowy spaces. The Mediaeval Mind has in recent years attracted a growing band of devoted students. We turn to it now, not for controversy but for reverent observation.

The period is of such extent (A.D. 600 to 1500) that there is some hesitation in attempting so brief a reference. Roughly, however, it saw the closing of two controversies, that of the *Filioque*, and that which passed to the discussion of the Work of the Spirit as distinct from the problem of God-

hood. It emerged more and more as a work of Divine Love, for Love in God means a Trinity. And the Trinity in turn is the key to the meaning of the Holy Spirit. In the evolution of that meaning for Christian piety, great figures successively appeared. In the Ancient Church John of Damascus provided the summing up of results, though he stopped short of affirming the "Procession" of the Spirit from the Father *and* the Son. In the Mediaeval Church, estranged as it became from the Eastern section, Anselm is chief exponent for the first part of our period, Thomas Aquinas for the second, while in the new epoch Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin present the Reformed doctrine. In this last stage, the Spirit came into a light that at times was almost overpowering. The heart spoke more loudly than the intellect, and Mysticism, well or ill regulated, invaded the cloisters of scientific doctrine.

In the strictly Scholastic Period, the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, we may accept three distinct stages. First came the preparation for the long and arduous labours of the philosophers in the shaping of religious dogma. Next we find

the preparation for that great apologetic undertaking to which the Church's thinkers addressed themselves. And lastly we find the tide of Realism gathering its forces to overwhelm the followers of the Nominalist reaction represented by Abelard. Nominalism found no quarter, though it escaped complete destruction by passing, through Occam and others, into the ranks of the Reformers. Its revival in our day has had at least one conspicuous example in the late Dean Rashdall's work on the Atonement.

The whole period, however, was one of almost complete acceptance of the Great Creeds. It was only in the fourteenth century that the seemingly solid fabric of dogma began to show signs of serious disturbance. Our immediate concern is to note rapidly how that disturbance ultimately reacted on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Obviously only the briefest expression can be attempted in so enormous a period, reaching to the verge of the Reformation.

At the outset we must awake to the fact that our Christian beliefs of to-day do not come directly to us from the starting-point

in the New Testament. Already in ancient religious literature we find ourselves breathing a different air, although always conscious of our need to return at each important point to the atmosphere of gospel and epistle. No thoughtful person to-day pretends to ignore the intermediate spaces of history between the Primitive Church and that of the later ages. Some indeed argue that the history of doctrine must be regarded as ending with the Creeds. But there is undeniably a certain and a necessary evolution in all religious thought. A fixed deposit of faith is an unscientific conception; even Newman's theory of development of doctrine has failed to secure universal approval. And in no quarter is it less applicable than in the problem of the Spirit. The very idea of the Spirit as a Spirit of Guidance into all truth compels us to recognise the incessant activity which has accompanied that important Christian conception. And the fact that the Spirit is one not only of discovery of the deep things of God, but also of moral progress and personal sanctification, must prepare us to have patience with the mediaeval theories. It will also enable us to guard

against impatience with the visible record of such theories in an immense literature, as well as in an imposing system of worship, architecture, and praise.

The Fathers of the Church in its first stages had hailed with unanimous voice the advent of the Holy Spirit, and they were bound to give it the fullest expression. Yet, along with their changing doctrinal formulas, there flowed also a swelling tide of devout experience. Inevitably, Mysticism formed no small part of that flood. According indeed to some learned authorities we ought to detect one mighty movement of the Spirit as a self-revealing Power onward from Augustine to the Reformation, even although the Eastern Church in one detail restricted its formal expression of devotion in this department.

The period now under review showed, *firstly*, a continuance and a more thorough examination of the special question of the *Filioque*, and *secondly*, the formal closure of that discussion and the opening of more practical problems. Chief of these was that of the Work of the Spirit in salvation. The movement known as Mysticism was an early and an incessant feature, and it

brought at least considerable assuagement, because the idea of the Spirit began to present itself under the amiable form of Divine Love. Never has the religious life of Christian nations proceeded to greater profit than when this idea of Love penetrated the hearts of saints and scholars. To-day we may find few who deny that this may be the key to admit us to a truer and deeper appreciation of the difficult Trinitarian formula. It was Augustine's happy use of a psychological illustration which led the nobler minds to see that the Divine Three are most intelligibly conceived as One *in Love*.

The first symptom of advance was the fact that the Mediaeval Church gradually realised that the doctrine of the Person of Christ cannot be completed without a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the two doctrines must keep step together; they must proceed upon a realised basis of equality. This result is of surpassing importance to our modern faith, for it may almost be said to settle, at least formally, the haunting question, *Is the Spirit a Person?*

The mediaevalists gave an affirmative

answer in most positive terms; perhaps indeed we may think that they were too positive. To them the Spirit is not a creature, but rather (if one may dare to say so) a Christ. Orthodox theology in the eighth century argues from the Godhead of the Spirit to that of the Christ.[1] The Spirit is perfect God, though, of course, not to be hailed as God the Father. Yet John of Damascus at this period would not go further than to say, The Spirit proceeds from the Father; and there the Eastern theology remained officially silent. In the West, all else rapidly followed; prayer was offered to the Spirit, for in praying to One we pray to All, otherwise there would be no real equality. For there can be but one Essence of the Godhead. If God is a Trinity of Mind, Knowledge, and Love, as Augustine suggested, then the Spirit who is Love must be equal with the Father and the Son, because Love is equal to Mind and Knowledge. Love knows all, and understands all. Here surely is an echo of Paul's famous eulogy in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. But it is

[1] Watkin Jones, *The Holy Spirit in the Mediaeval Church*, p. 317.

also, and more deeply, a keynote of the Johannine writings.

The formal demonstration of this proposition is found in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. He shews that the Three are each *plenus Deus*, and as a side-issue he declares that the "sin against the Holy Ghost" is unpardonable because it is a sin against the whole Trinity. Every operation of the Spirit is from One Undivided Trinity—whether creation, revelation, spiritual gifts, baptism in the name of Jesus or in the Threefold Name. Even Church Government, so often ascribed to mere expediency, is added by a recognised Roman authority.[1] But the fullest and most valuable credentials of the Spirit come from the ethical side, the work wrought in man's soul and character. This is essentially a divine work, not the result of mere atmosphere or influence, but a definite sanctifying process mediated through the Spirit, yet truly the action and operation of the whole Trinity. For (it might be argued) if man's salvation cost the life of God's Son, then man's sanctification could not be valuated at less than the

[1] Bellarmine.

entire Trinity. This is a magnificent assertion, on the one hand of the Love of God, and on the other of the Worth of Man. Thus the Holy Spirit is no mere created form of being, but rather the irresistible Love of God. And indeed, for the mystic, the Spirit is God Himself. In such phrases we recognise the voices of Augustine and Bernard, both of them mystics.

The Trinity is plainly prominent at such stages as these of the doctrine of the Spirit. It has always, and naturally, filled men's minds with profound awe; and this of course tends to restrict investigation. The attitude of Moses at the Burning Bush is not unaccountable, although the modern mind may deprecate such a method in presence of unusual phenomena. *Credo, quia impossibile* is not to-day a popular watchword in theology. The mediaeval mind had no such difficulty. Its greatest exponents, frankly and even sternly, declare that the whole doctrine, including the Spirit, is a "mystery of faith." And yet they gallantly contend that Reason is under a compulsion to accept, and to formulate, even such a mystery. There will always be among us those who stand

afar off in presence of it. It is indeed open to question how far the mediaevalists were warranted in their exultant belief that Reason, though unable to explain, can nevertheless express in its intricate distinctions so tremendous a conception. In establishing, through whole libraries of doctrine, the Personal Godhead of the Spirit, these Schoolmen did not shut their eyes to the fact that all their efforts and expedients could not exhaust the Divine Wonder. Like Dr. Illingworth they had to confess, *Omnia exeunt in mysterium.*[1] But who will venture, in the present age, to say that they laboured entirely in vain? In rigorously claiming that the Spirit is truly God, they have endowed the Church with that single conception which appears to be most of all in harmony with the teaching of Jesus, viz. that God is Love, and has given what He loved, His Only Son; and given it as an abiding Spirit of Love among Men.

After all, however, Mediaevalism found a charitable word to say for those (perhaps weaker brethren) who were afraid to launch out on an ocean so unmapped and un-

[1] Illingworth, *Doctrine of the Trinity*, p. 135.

plumbed. These brethren took refuge in that appeal to Jesus which has always risen to human lips since He ascended to the Father. Something like a "Jesus-Religion" had naturally arisen from Pagan environment. The interpenetration of the Christian way with Mithraism is perhaps a probable illustration. But, in the former, it is never mere paganism. The charge against the Christians in days of persecution was that they sang hymns to Jesus as a God. The instinct to pay especial and sometimes sole worship to the Saviour arises even yet; but not always is it met by the insight of the mediaeval theologian [1] who saw in it a recognition of the whole Trinity as summed up in Christ. That kindly old teacher suggested that the Personality of the Spirit is implied in the appeal to the Son of God. There is in this whole-hearted trust in Jesus a cry to the combined forces of Father, Son, and Spirit, the Three in One. It represents in us all an irresistible instinct, and it is not an intentional denial of the Trinity, or of the reality of the Spirit in religious experience. By the older mediaeval teachers, indeed,

[1] Johann Wessel (1420-1489).

it was expressly recognised that in the very term *Spiritus*, meaning *breath*, ambiguity was sure to arise; Jesus Himself "breathed" on His Apostles as He said "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Elijah had acted in like fashion, but with even deeper symbolism, in the case of the Shunammite (2 Kings iv. 34).

Yet the necessity of distinctions in the Trinity lay very heavily on the mediaevalists, nor is it to be assumed that it is removed from responsible theologians of the present day.

The Spirit, then, is a Person even as the Father and the Son, because (*a*) within the Godhead there are perceived to be personal relations. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Even in Old Testament days, God had said, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh"—the great Pentecostal phrase. Such utterances disclose personality in some sublime mode, as between the Three Persons.

Then (*b*) each of those Three has definite offices which reveal a special and distinguishing function. The Father gives, the Son goes, the Spirit incessantly follows. The Father speaks, the Son becomes the em-

bodied Word, the Spirit interprets and applies it.

And (*c*) in these relations there is a note of eternity; they are not passing differentiations, temporary or delegated duties. They demand accurate expression in prayer and in preaching. In this exalted spiritual region, even logical and verbal accuracy is an expression of Reality. At this point, the Old and the New Realism seem to meet.

(*d*) The relationship of Love in the Godhead is not simply divine love in God, but that love which is for us distinguishable as personal—the love of Father and Son, and between them the outcome of such love—a veritable *hypostasis* or personal entity. The marvellous love of a divine Father and His Son could not, it was claimed, exist in its fullness without this third reality.

And finally (*e*) if God is One in Three, the Spirit must be a Person. Otherwise, the Son is not so, nor is even the Being of God as Father properly expressed. An isolated and unrealised God is inconceivable. In short, it was contended that if in particular the Spirit be not a Person, then neither are Father and Son Persons. It is urged also that the record of Pentecost, and of all that

followed it, shows that there is in the world of faith not only *agitatio*, but *Agitator*.

And to the haunting question, what *is* a Person ? the answer of Thomas Aquinas is given—" Person is an indivisible substance of rational nature."

We must not simply wonder at some of this mediaeval reasoning, still less impatiently dismiss it as unintelligible, and fall back on what is loosely called " common sense." It does not of course gain by being put in bald sentences. And (especially in Thomas Aquinas) it is severely conditioned by the mediaeval principle, the very citadel of the old Realism, that Reason sees in our world not mere unconnected objects of sense, but gigantic " substances " or forms of being. Such forms find their fullest amplitude in God. He is the supreme Substance, and in Him are three indivisible forms of actual being, having the quality of Reason, and partaking of the One Reality. The making of a World demands not only the lowest but also the highest conception of Life ; and the highest is Deity. Shall we then say that of such *Deitas* (θεότης) there shall be no resultant life ? Is God to be pictured as destitute of

Personality? If He is Person, must not His be an amazing Personality?

Thus, or somewhat thus, argue the great Lombard, and the yet greater Thomas.

But in this mediaeval exercise we are warned against "numeration" and still more against "sub-numeration." In God there is no first or last. For the distinctions here are distinctions of attributes, not literally distinctions between Persons. Peter Lombard is quoted: "Three horses are not one animal"; but Three divine Persons are One Substance or Essence. In this reasoning the Holy Spirit is again presented as neither first nor last, but *equal.*

Little wonder that such abstract reasonings do not always help faith. Yet there is help to educated thinking in such maxims as these—"Triunity is not triplicity." "The Persons are not Persons except as united."

From this point, no limit was possible to the work predicated of the Spirit. Mediaevalism may weary us with its remorseless subtleties; but it has a way of coming at last to very important conclusions. Accordingly, it always laid stress

on the dependence of Nature upon God; nothing exists except as due to a First Cause. This in Roman text-books is still held as self-evident. But now, the glory and power ascribed in equal measure to the Spirit demanded a recognition that Nature is dependent on the Spirit also, as co-operating with the other Persons of the Trinity. The divine Three, being regarded as One, act as a unity through three qualities which are present in every created "substance." These three are Form, Matter, and Unity. The resulting creation shows also three phenomena, Fruitfulness, Production (birth), and Love. Yet it is the entire and undivided Trinity which operates, creating all things, comprehending all, and ruling all. And it is, in particular, the Spirit who is the agent of Creation. He is the Spiritual Life in all things. Thus the term Processio is expanded in order to indicate the Life-Giver. Wherever the Spirit passes, Life follows, and Life through Love. For everywhere the Spirit is making Nature, and especially Human Nature, perfect through Love.

In such phrases, which have all the daring of mediaevalism, we perhaps may find a reminiscence of the older language of

Chemical Science, which once spoke of certain substances as having an affinity or affection for each other, so as to cause an actual "explosion" in rushing together. Thus might we see in the Cross itself the explosion of the Love of God for Man. Strange if we have borrowed from the Schoolmen here! And beautiful the thought that God's world is full of Love! The unknown writer to the Hebrews had some similar idea when he argued that the Creator, "in bringing many sons unto glory," must needs make the "Captain of our salvation perfect *through sufferings*" (Heb. ii. 10).

Mediaevalism emphasised from the outset the teaching or inspiring function of the Spirit. Even in Old Testament times the Spirit was recognised as speaking by the prophets, and this was in due time embodied in the Nicene Creed. From this to a more or less definite theory of the Inspiration of the Scriptures was an obvious passage. But verbal and literal inspiration was mostly, in the Middle Ages as afterwards, safeguarded by certain conditions. The inspired writers of Scripture were, after all, human and fallible beings. They ob-

viously grew in knowledge as they grew older, and as social progress advanced. Hence verbal inspiration did not long secure the Schoolmen's unquestioning acceptance. Commentaries and the authoritative verdict of the Church were generally interposed. It is characteristic that Thomas Aquinas formulates the entire theory of Revelation without referring to the Holy Spirit.[1] This arose from his initial proposition that the Trinity is necessarily a closed circle; all that passes within it is self-contained, and can be understood only under human and external conditions. We know God therefore by representative symbols. This at first seems strange doctrine from a Realist, though it may simply be a warning that the "Thing-in-itself" must ever elude full definition. To the ordinary mind, it would appear to exclude any real contact between the Spirit and the human soul. It is therefore at this point that the mystical assumption of immediate experience of God seems opportune, much as it has been discouraged by hard scholastic reasoning. It is not difficult at any rate to see how imperative

[1] Rees, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 176.

is the need of a richer view of Inspiration in Scripture. "Holy men," said Paul, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is true that he also emphasised the difficulty of interpretation. "Now we see through a glass, darkly." The inevitable result of the Thomist dictum is the theory of an infallible Interpreter on earth. But in the Roman constitution the Infallible Interpreter speaks not in the name of the Spirit but as the Vicar of Christ.

The acceptance of the definitions of Thomas Aquinas accordingly led to a certain subordination of the Holy Spirit, while the Person of Christ was enthroned almost in isolation. Hence mediaeval liturgies shew a marked emphasis on the name of Jesus. We have already noted how the Oneness of the Trinity was applied for this purpose in the sense that whatever is done by the One Person is valid as the action of the entire Trinity. Along with a certain lowered status of the Spirit in the work of Revelation, mediaeval teaching affirmed the preëminence of Jesus in respect of human relations. It was argued that, although all Three were involved in the Incarnation, He alone became incarnate;

He is, in short, as the Fourth Gospel expresses it, "the fullness of the Godhead, bodily." Yet, on the other hand, the Spirit dominated in the miraculous Conception, although it was the Father who begat. In the stupendous drama of Incarnation, it is the Son who is the central figure. He it is who willingly submits to Incarnation, although He is preserved as a sinless being by the atmosphere of the Spirit. The Procession of the Spirit from the Son is eternal. It is the *Mission* or Sending of the Spirit which is temporal. Of the Spirit there is no incarnation or humiliation; always and everywhere He is *plenus Deus*. Thus He is at all times present in history, but not as Christ by way of begetting.

It must be confessed that this curt statement of the Scholastic definitions of the Spirit does not readily attract the ordinary mind. It savours of an amazing confidence in methods of reasoning which appear to-day to be out of touch with reality. To apply the prevailing logic to such transcendent being as that of the Trinity argued a lack of proportion as well as of humility. Nor is it even free from a reminiscence of Gnostic exuberance. It

may serve here to remind us of the remarkable turn which it gave to mystical piety. For it was in such a mass of paradoxes and refinements of logic that Mysticism burst into hymn and meditation, revealing the inward heat of those scholastic terms, and presenting the Spirit as God's immanent Love, sanctifying sinful men by infusing into their hearts a passion of responsive devotion. The hymns of the Spirit, as sung to-day, move a sympathetic worshipper by a vocabulary which in itself is technical and archaic. Yet it has a dignity and even a majesty not to be overlooked or lightly abandoned. And after all, it is the *goodness* of the Lord which bringeth us to repentance, not the wiredrawn distinctions of doctrine.

It is, however, probable that the general effect of Scholasticism was to cloud the fact of Personality in the Spirit, because it brought men down from the Councils of the Trinity to the altars of the Church. With a sort of philosophic compassion it offered to men concrete things, things of sense, upon which they could pour out their heart's affection. Thus in mediaeval Church life, the Sacraments restored to the

Spirit some of the lost Splendour. "To magnify the Sacraments was to magnify the Spirit"; so said Dr. Swete in a conversation with his colleague. One might as truly say, it was to magnify the priest. The *opus operatum* was ascribed to the Spirit. At His descent, duly invoked, the things of mere sense became things of immortal and life-giving beauty. Even the priest vanishes then, for God comes. Not without an absolute necessity, it is the Spirit who presides at such moments of human ecstasy.

After this, it was only logical to ascribe the whole process of human sanctification to the sacramental efficacy of the Spirit. He is thus the Spirit of Adoption, restoring by His divine visitations the forfeited sonship of sinners. He is the Spirit of Fatherly Love, forgiving all, and taking away all that offends and hurts. Mysticism in fact has its home everywhere in this labyrinth of scholastic distinctions and decisions. And it may at first bewilder or even mislead. But its redeeming quality is that it writes on every sacrament, and confirms in every devout experience, the flaming inscription —"God is Love."

II. THE MODERN MIND

The transition to what may roughly be called the modern doctrine of the Holy Spirit represents a certain revolt against the Thomist subtleties. Generally regarded, it shews the triumph of Augustinian mysticism, for it places the chief emphasis not on logic and metaphysics, but on religious experience. Throughout the mediaeval age scholars of the highest eminence were engaged in meeting each other's demands for "proofs" of the Trinity. There is something almost pathetic in the exultation of Anselm on miraculously securing his "proof" of the existence of God, and in the ill-concealed pride of Thomas Aquinas as he built up his gigantic treatises. We must not forget that then, as now, philosophers and theologians wrote with a view to academic triumphs. Nor shall we deny, I believe, that, all unconscious of the Schoolmen's theories and rivalries, the masses in their own way subsisted on a few simple beliefs and instincts. The piety of an uneducated people is largely emotional. Even in a more lettered age, like our own, it is emotion rather than dry reasoning which

moves the majority to worship and to good deeds. Thomas Aquinas is still the highest authority in the Roman Church; but Roman piety among the masses is little aware of his monumental decisions. The return of Augustine after a long exile is therefore not surprising. All sections of the Reformed world found relief in the Augustinian views of the Holy Spirit, as they had taken shape in the Creeds.

Not only so, but in the Counter-Reformation Creed, that of the Council of Trent, the Holy Spirit appeared in a setting which distinctly recognises the Work of the Spirit as indispensable to salvation. There, we are assured that the Spirit's inspiration is necessary to eternal life; accordingly, the Spirit is God even as the Father and the Son; the "operations" of the Spirit are operations of God. Proceeding from the Father and the Son, He represents the Divine Love, a Love which is "on fire." There is here an echo of St. Francis of Assisi in a well-known utterance. Augustine's theory of Grace is effectively present; Grace, say the Trent Decrees, is so operated as to pursue and to help the sinner, and this divine approach is due to the Spirit.

The awakened soul is not, however, abandoned to his own unaided efforts, for the Spirit carries on the work of sanctification. All this, and more, may be found in Reformed teaching, which in its earliest utterances is just as "scholastic" as its predecessor, although it rejects the machinery of priests and of sacramental miracles.

In the chief Reformed Symbols, indeed, there is substantial agreement, at such intimate moments of the religious life, with the Council of Trent. The differences which proved and continue to prove invincible concern the problem of Authority in the main. The Holy Spirit has never hitherto been the cause of separation among the larger bodies of Reformed Christians themselves. It is a sinister phenomenon to-day that there appears to be some undercurrent among them which indicates that a change may be near in this respect, and that a restatement of Trinitarian theory may be demanded in the name of scholarship as well as of conscience. Yet past experience suggests that there will always be found among the chief Reformed Churches a uniform and steady acceptance of the Godhood and Divine Work of the Spirit.

It is, of course, natural that Churches claiming freedom of thought should develop a certain variety in the details of dogmatic expression. Thus there have been and are those who see in the Trinitarian formulas themselves a menace to the idea of God as One. The old Socinianism, for example, shrank from the expression "Three Persons," and preferred to describe the Spirit as a Power and not as a Person. This represents for our day the protest against any philosophic pluralism such as William James of Harvard more or less suggested. It has even been said that the Scholasticism of Aquinas was more or less akin to Socinianism, chiefly because his rigid logic defined God as a Being altogether outside human contact. But the Reformation is not really chargeable with Socinianism either in Roman or in Protestant thought. The position in this respect has been well stated by a recent writer: "Both Rationalism and Catholicism removed the living God out of all personal contact with human experience. Both were equally 'Deistic' in their conception of the relation between God and the world. Catholicism would bridge the gulf with elements derived from the

religious stock of mankind, with priesthood and sacraments. Socinianism refused all aid outside the intellect, and interposed the impersonal power or principle which it called the Holy Spirit. The Protestants tried to realise the presence of the living God on the basis of the ancient doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Holy Spirit as God present and efficacious in the world." [1]

For us it may be wise to think of occasional lapses from orthodoxy on this point as being "scholastic" rather than vital. And, speaking roughly, we may be justified in describing the Reformation and its results down to our day as a return to Augustine's fervid acceptance of the Spirit as a Personal Power within the Godhead, operating throughout the whole area of Christ's redeeming sacrifice and work. This general result will not prevent speculation from continuing under changing philosophic conditions. If the angels desire to look into such things, yet remain unfallen, we cannot lightly condemn mere human inquirers who are attracted, again and again, into Trinitarian discussions. Our present issue is limited to the problem of the Spirit

[1] Rees, *ut supra*, p. 180.

as conditioning a Trinity in Godhead. There will always be minds which find this too difficult for thought, and content themselves by declaring that its basis must be found elsewhere. Thus a recent writer says—"Subject and object we can know, but a third Somewhat, moving between, is not clear. . . . If the believer wished to say that the Son and Spirit were emanations from the Divine Nature . . . there would be no logical objections, though nothing in the doctrine hints that there should be trinity, rather than more or less than trinity." [1]

Such utterances ignore the central factor in the Reformation, which practically based itself on the Christian Consciousness more than on either authority or on the letter of Scripture. The historic appeal of Luther at the Diet of Worms no doubt specified "proofs from Scripture," but it also added the alternative of Reason (*evidente ratione*).[2] But the "evident reason" to which he appealed was, as his whole life showed, the illumination of the Holy Spirit speaking authoritatively in the Scriptures, and

[1] Bishop F. T. McConnell, *Is God Limited?* p. 265.

[2] See *Grisar*, Cappadelta's edition, ii. 65.

speaking with the Spirit's voice to spiritual minds. Such an appeal had already been implied and adopted in the teaching of earlier reformers, and perhaps most of all in the religious life and experience of the mystics within the old Church. Nor must we forget that Humanism within that Church, by unveiling the neglected picture of humanity with its emotions, sufferings, and aspirations, gave a powerful impulse to the whole Reforming movement. For it reminded men that God had loved not simply the Church but the World, and that Jesus Himself was a Man. It revealed the terrible fact that in a sense Churchmen had crucified the Saviour afresh by their fatal logic, and might well confess—" we hid as it were our faces from Him ; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Of these tokens of a new Christian Consciousness in the old Church the most noteworthy for our purpose is to be found in mystical literature. The mystics did more than any other single body of men to emphasise the value of religious experience. They themselves fell back upon the inner sphere of man's being, and solicited the testimony of the soul. It may be that they

often became lost in the idea of God, and failed at times to use precisely the correct phrases of Trinitarian formulas. But they must never be treated as enemies of the Christian Faith, and they have regularly actuated many forms of piety within our Reformed Churches and their offshoots. It is a mere commonplace to-day to say that Luther's experience at the outset took the form of an appeal to the Spirit speaking within his own personality, and at length articulating the answer to his question, What must I do to be saved? What is thus affirmed of Luther applies, with needful allowances for difference of temperament and of nationality, to Calvin. The latter indeed offers a thoroughgoing version of the relation of the Spirit to the Scriptures. The *testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum* is for all the Reformed the fundamental evidence of truth. The modern mind can get no further without shattering the very foundation. And Scripture is plainly the profoundest product of the religious consciousness.

It is not possible within our limits to detail the various movements of Reformed thought affecting the Spirit during the

centuries since the rupture with Rome. A chart of the different religious bodies and opinions would, however, shew little real divergence on the general theory. The cleavage which appeared between the Old and the New has, of course, been criticised with some emphasis by those who represent uniformity in doctrine as a thing essential to the true Church. Such uniformity, however, especially if defined as practical identity, has never really existed. Vincent of Lerins' test of orthodoxy as dependent on " what always, everywhere, and by everybody has been believed " was hardly offered to the world when it was seen to be a cause of separation rather than of unity. In the period which succeeded the age of Reformation, there were many movements of controversy, but, broadly speaking, the doctrine of the Spirit was never in essentials abandoned. Indeed, if we regard the Mediaeval Period as concerned mainly with a Religion of Authority, we may then see in the Reforming period, with all its diverse opinions, a Religion of the Spirit. Out of the disruption of the Old Church there came a general rally of non-Roman forces around the profound

conviction that Religion is truly kindled and maintained in the region of the Spirit. Churches, like men, must indeed be guided into truth by the Spirit. Thus a doctrine first elaborated by Augustine emerged in its fullness at the Reformation, demanding the allegiance of every church. All sections, whether Lutheran, Calvinistic, Arminian, whether Puritan or Prelatist, Quaker or Methodist, experienced a new vigour in their efforts to realise the being and work, the offices and operations, of the Spirit. The common basis was the recognition that the Grace of God is mediated through a divine Power, a Person in the Godhead, without whose sanction or influence the religious life remains impoverished and ineffective.

But this remarkable survival to our own day, in the humblest as in the highest grades of Christian life, has no doubt been accompanied by many intellectual difficulties. In our own recollection, piety has been dogged by profound difficulties in philosophy. Solutions of the Trinitarian problem, in particular, have been offered from time to time, as they were abundantly offered in the mediaeval age. Even Augustine, though destined to conquer the

hearts of Christians in a far later time, did not escape the metaphysical lure. There are still many survivors who recall the hopes excited by the Hegelian formula of reintegration. It attracted general support for a whole period. It furnished many preachers with eloquent oratory. Such philosophic solutions soothed the troubled minds of educated men for a season. Philosophic research does not, however, give us a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for it excludes a plurality of persons, or else it offers a pluralism which has no clear relation to Christian history or Christian experience. Subject, Object, and their mutual relation are not, after all, religious terms. Hegelianism also had its sinister aspect, sometimes producing a negation of the very idea of God, much more of any Holy Spirit as a being involved in the Godhead. Consequently, Ritschlianism gave up metaphysics in despair, though still half consciously struggling after some hopeful view of the world. It still retains its deep-seated antinomy between the world and man, forgetful of the great fact proclaimed by Christ Himself—"I have overcome the World."

Two currents have flowed in the most recent literature of the doctrine of the Spirit. The one is a tide of revival, the other of more or less destructive criticism. Beginning with the latter, we find a growing tendency, already more than once alluded to, to ignore the definite Trinitarian results attained by the end of the eighth century, and summarised in the compendium of John of Damascus, his *Exact Statement of the Christian Faith.* Apart from the difficult term Person, it is sometimes to-day suggested that all that history really demands is a duality in the Godhead. Paul himself in a curious passage has been held to hint at a crisis in which the triumph of Christ and His Church shall be followed by the return to literal unity in the Godhead: "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him (Christ), then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28). A process of final reunion in the Godhead seems almost to be involved, in order to restore the interrupted calm of Creation. Ancient dogma also had conceived the human nature of the Lord as impersonal, and thus had

preserved (as was thought) in the Incarnation an unmingled Godhead. To such a theory philosophical thought sometimes inclines, when it seeks escape from the alternative of Unitarianism. The personality of the Spirit accordingly presents a difficulty which must be removed, and this in recent speculation is attempted in one of two ways. On the one hand, it is frankly propounded that the Spirit is but another name for the ascended Lord. St. Paul can be quoted for this in the short maxim —"Now the Lord is that Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 17). On the other hand, the Spirit is described as simply a stream of divine tendency, a spiritual presence in ceaseless contact with men and with nations. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." Poets may personify the wind, but that does not make the wind a Person.

The first of these two expedients is that which most attracts the philosophic mind. Professor Pringle-Pattison has impressed the religious mind by the suggestion that the idea of God is not fully realised without assuming a certain human factor within the Divine Being. Something similar had previously been written by Dr. W. K.

Clifford; there has been, he thought, from all eternity, something in God which may be called the Humanity of His Deity. To acquire a workable conception of God, it seems necessary first to account for the theology of the Son and the Spirit; and assuming (as Dr. Pringle-Pattison does) that Spirit and Son are identical, the final step becomes possible—to reduce the Trinity to a Duality, and finally to view God as All-in-all.

"It is, to my mind" (says our author), "a great misfortune that 'the Spirit of God,' the *influence* of God in the human soul, or, as it is alternately called in the New Testament, 'Christ,' 'the Spirit of Jesus,' the mystic presence of the Lord in the hearts of His followers, a spirit of comfort and consolation in their loss, revealing the mind of the Master whom on earth they had often so ill understood, and so guiding them and the Church after them into all truth—it is, I say, a misfortune that expressions like these, and the spiritual fact for which they stand, should have been materialised so as to suggest the existence of a third personality or agency distinct from both the Father and the Son. For what better word could be found to express just the fact of divine immanence upon which the possibility of communion with God is based, the illuminative presence of God operative in every soul which He has created? The conception of the Spirit is, in fact, the final

and complete account of the One God as the Father of Spirits, their Creator, Inspirer, and Redeemer."

The writer adds that " popular Christianity is unable to assimilate that sublime mysticism," and thus have arisen Hume's scepticism, Wells' " Invisible King," and Hegel's " Absolute." [1]

It may be doubted if Mysticism is justly credited with this mode of reabsorbing Jesus and the Spirit in the unity of God. Such a phase marks rather the disappearance of true mysticism, which inevitably distinguishes divine personalities, especially that of Jesus. Dr. E. F. Scott on this aspect is singularly vacillating. " It cannot be made out," he writes, " that Paul anywhere identifies the Spirit and Christ." Later, he says—" It may therefore be said that in effect Paul identifies Christ and the Spirit." In fact, Paul here exhibits " an inevitable confusion." [2]

The second and commoner course, especially at the present time, is to conclude frankly to the idea of an Influence, or factor in individual as in the general conscious-

[1] Streeter, *The Spirit*, pp. 11, 12.
[2] E. F. Scott, *ut supra*, 182-183.

ness. It is probable that this view owes its revival in recent years to the remarkable growth of Psychology, and especially of the Psychology of Religion. The spread of Spiritualism, in many forms and in its widest sense, has not been favourable to the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And the eccentricities of some religious coteries concerned in "deepening the spiritual life" have strangely prejudiced many observers against the definite assertion of Personality in the Spirit. One obvious result has been the gradual disappearance of the "language of the Holy Ghost" from prayer, from preaching, and above all from theological literature, except in such vague commonplaces as we hear and sometimes echo by an imitative and mechanical habit. There is, however, one form of this practice which causes real concern. That is, when theological writers of undoubted learning and distinction seem to favour a kind of double meaning. Thus we find in a recent and most able book, that Jesus "avoided" references to the Spirit, that indeed a certain confusion of ideas appears in the gospels upon this point, and that, strictly speaking, the idea of the

Spirit did not belong to the Gospel proclaimed by Jesus. The Ethical, it is affirmed, is the true Spiritual. And yet later on we are assured that, none the less, the doctrine of the Spirit has been an element of incalculable value in our religion. The Spirit was in reality an influence, a current of religious thought. It enabled the disciples of Jesus to do their work. It gave the Gospel the status of a divine message. It helped men to think of Christianity as a growing revelation. It served, and it continues to serve, as "the ultimate witness to the truth of the Gospel." In short, unless we are mistaken, it was a doctrine and nothing more; and it answered to a real spiritual experience. Only, the doctrine was not the correct answer. Therefore, it is concluded, it will now secure again a real experience, when disembarrassed of archaic meanings. The real age of the Spirit is at hand. Old creeds are passing away. Men to-day are seeking for a "religion of the Spirit."

Such results, from distinguished and learned sources, are puzzling, especially when they arise out of no mere philosophical prejudice, but from careful theological

processes. They clearly suggest the view that the Spirit is no longer to be regarded as one of the traditional persons of a Trinity. They offer an impression of the Spirit as a something rather indefinable, which, however, has behind it an experience likely to reassert itself, untrammelled by mistaken theories and crude personification.

The influence of the New Psychology has plainly been active in this region of speculation. In a recent well-meant effort to reconcile the older doctrine with modern thought, we have a more refined phrasing of the relation of Jesus to the Spirit. The writer in this case is sincerely concerned for the doctrine of the Three Persons. Between the Son and the Spirit he suggests that there is a "reciprocal personality," while nevertheless they remain "two Persons." It is not altogether clear what is meant by a "reciprocal personality." But as the "subliminal consciousness" is also referred to, we may perhaps conjecture that it suggests a "double personality." It is, however, apparently a theory of Influence, only the Influence is described as a Person always emerging from an "impersonal background." This is one of the

products of Modernism, and is expressly offered to propitiate the theories of Deissmann and Seeberg, which regarded the Spirit as being simply a Presence, that, namely, of the risen and glorified Redeemer among men. Our writer discusses pronouns in support of his own conjecture, just as the early theologians discussed prepositions. Thus, the masculine pronoun to him proves the Spirit to be a person; the neuter, *It*, also suggests a Person, but from an impersonal background, as Music suggests a Voice.[1]

German theories, speaking generally, deal with this problem in the interests of simplification, that is, so as to reduce the intellectual difficulties of the doctrine of the Trinity. They start usually from a careful examination of the Pentecostal type of spirit phenomena. Thus Weinel frankly regards these early outpourings of the Spirit as neurotic, comparing them with the mediaeval St. Vitus's dance and the excesses of the Camisards. The attitude of St. Paul is utilised also to fix a certain character of hysteria or other morbid affections to the phenomena. It is conjectured

[1] Dr. W. S. Bishop, *Spirit and Personality*, pp. 44, 59.

that the Spirit-doctrine took its rise in the Pauline contrast between the Flesh and the Spirit. The alleged War between these factors of experience occasioned the excesses and eccentricities which the apostle saw fit to discourage at a later stage. This he did by extolling rather the works of Christian charity, and those utterances which all could understand. Paul himself, it has been alleged, "did not advance one step beyond the most primitive Hebrew ideas." So that, in Pauline teaching, the Spirit was the Spirit of God, the Spirit of "a sound mind."

Theories like these tend to swell the modern movement for the depersonalising of the Spirit. They leave us with a conception of a powerful and ceaseless religious Influence, not of a divine Person. And they are largely responsible for the neglect in systematic doctrine of the whole ancient *locus communis* dealing with the Third Person of the Godhead.

It remains now to refer briefly to the tokens which are appearing of a certain revival of the orthodox belief. To this there is no doubt that the lifelong labours of the late Dr. H. B. Swete have most

weightily contributed. To his prolonged investigations every succeeding writer must render respect. It is a simple duty to acknowledge that the present course of lectures owes much to him up to this point, as well as to the sequel prepared at his desire by Mr. Watkins-Jones in 1922. In Scotland, a stimulus to more earnest research and more positive teaching on the subject was given by my late distinguished and amiable colleague, Dr. James Cooper, aided by the publication of a special volume written by a number of his friends on *The Pentecostal Gift* (1903). This in some degree occasioned a revival of the practice of special exhortations and services at the annual return of Whitsuntide. A growing literature is appearing, and there is a larger interest in the whole subject. The reassertion of the traditional doctrine of the Spirit will probably occasion a deeper investigation. It is certainly inadvisable that the old condition of neglect and misunderstanding should continue. All are agreed that a revival of religion is loudly called for; but this will depend very largely on a revival of theology in its most spiritual sense. The more we consider

the long evolution of the doctrine, the keener will be our sense of the need of a courageous examination of our heritage in the doctrine of the Trinity, as the safeguard of a renewed realisation of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit.

Every lover of the Gospel may well echo the ancient prayer (for the nineteenth Sunday after Trinity)—" O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts ; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE review in which we have passed the development of the doctrine of the Spirit has already suggested a close connection between that doctrine and the mystic experience. The mind of Jesus Himself, in its final stress, betrays the tendency to react on an inner and more intimate region. It is possible, however, to see the mystical element even at the outset of His career. While His youth and early manhood are unrecorded save in apocryphal fragments, we may reverently conclude from His striking message, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," that already life had brought Him the conviction that the celestial things have their fittest abode within. He taught therefore that it is from within a man the truly critical events come. To use St. Paul's phrase, our life is hid with Christ in God. Whether we regard it as bare fact or as the popular tradition of a long seclusion from human

company, we know that the desert time sent Him forth filled with angelic thought and emotion. This was also a quality which adhered to Him throughout His brief public ministry. It disclosed itself in many lonely vigils. It affected His companions with awe. We cannot but believe that this mystical *aura* which surrounded Him left deep traces on the chief of His Apostles. Finally, in the Fourth Gospel, it connects itself with the Holy Spirit. The secret, so to speak, is out. It was the Spirit which possessed Him from the time He was led into the wilderness. The Temptation, of which we have the tradition, shared in its darker aspects the same discords and dangers which have always attended the mystic mood. In short, Jesus Himself is the first Christian mystic. No Christian thinker need therefore, at the outset, pronounce a ban on Mysticism within the Church. Already, within the circle of the Gospel story, we may recognise the presence of an experience, not indeed unknown to ancient oriental religions, but specially indicated in the loneliness, the spiritual raptness, and the disclosure from the first of a definite leading of the Spirit,

such as have appeared continuously in the subsequent Christian ages.

Down through the time of apostles, prophets, and martyrs; through the doctrinal discussions of the sub-apostolic Church; through the early emergence of dogma in the first eight centuries; through mediaevalism, earlier and later; and in a new atmosphere after the Reformation, there are outbreaks of this testimony of the Spirit. There is something indeed significant in the way in which the Spirit moved, without challenge and as of very right. There was no long discussion, no critical debate or controversy, to bar the Spirit's progress, even in the most ardent time of the Church's early history. In the Nicene Creed as first set forth, the laconic closing phrase—"And we believe in the Holy Ghost"—is so far from being due to lack of conviction that its very brevity proclaims a fact already graven deep on the hearts of believers. It is the Church's breathing, which, like all respiration, is largely unconscious. One may almost regret that in the long-run it was found necessary to seek definitions, while later ages have paid the penalty in rending

controversy and at last in open denial. Yet the succession of the Spirit went on unchecked. It is impossible to deny as it is to define that which is organic, which is the Church's heartbeat.

Let us look rapidly at the almost artless disclosure of the Spirit's presence, as we see it in one instance after another among the great Christian thinkers and pietists.

Confessedly, Pentecost is the supreme revelation of this instinctive movement among simple and unsuspecting souls. Paul himself, though not enamoured of mere prodigies, found the Spirit interwoven with the best things in life. Whatsoever things are best in human character, and above all, the phenomenon of Love, he associates with the Spirit. As the life of the Church poured into social and recognised channels, it bore with it the "fruits of the Spirit." And when at length that Christian life began to realise its laws, this divine factor took its own place as paramount; it created and governed a "life of the Spirit." We thus pass into more beaten paths, and here we find the Spirit's power operating in ways which were almost independent of theological thought. Dr. Gore tells us

how in the mediaeval Church, amid long intervals of silence regarding the Spirit, there burst out the historic Spirit-Hymns —the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and the *Nunc Sancte Nobis Spiritus*.[1] It is indeed in sacred song that the silent Presence announces itself; for then its breathing becomes an audible harmony. And the ardour rises with the sense of the problems of faith. The feeling of God's far-offness in space and of man's inability to explain the world around him created an ever-growing chorus of passionate appeal and trustfulness. Scholasticism might continue to forge its heavy armour; but it fashioned also the thousand iron tongues which made "the melodies of the everlasting chime." "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."[2] Out of the dry and stiff formulas of the Schools there arose that longing for union with God which is the essence of Mysticism; just as, to-day, with Science chaining us to earth, we may expect our souls to escape into the divine presence. In short, we may expect an age

[1] Gore, *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 118.

[2] Judges xiv. 14.

of logic and dogma to seek refuge in the Spiritual as an impregnable inward fact. Driven within himself, man has always encountered there the power of the Spirit which enables him at last to say—" Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

But long before the pressure of Nature and of Natural Science became acute, there were successive revelations of this spiritual reaction in the lengthened evolution of doctrine. We have already noted how Hermas in his *Shepherd* framed a mystic picture of the Spirit; how the Pseudo-Clement found in the Spirit the true Brother of the Flesh; how the martyred Justin affirmed the Pauline maxim that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; how Tatian spoke of the Spirit as " the wings of the soul "; how Athenagoras described the same Spirit as " the effluence of God." Tertullian may have strayed from the orthodoxy of his day, but he traced man's highest moods to the Spirit, and even wrote of the mystic experience of Ecstasy. Nearer and nearer we come to this phenomenon of the Spirit creating the characteristic attitude of the mystic. It is true that Athanasius plunged into lifelong

controversies, but his treatise "de Incarnatione" reveals a close alliance with a theory of man's redemption by the flesh of Christ—a characteristic mystical thought. By the grace of the Spirit Christ is *in* us and we in Him; thus are we united to God Himself. When later controversies hardened and exasperated the Church, there arose the splendid strains of prayer, the solemn invocations of the Creator Spirit, until Hilary of Poitiers struck a high and clear mystical note. The Spirit, he declared, is to be realised most fully not in controversy but in experience. This, he urged, is the deepest fact within our souls; just as, in a later age, Pascal said—"The heart has reasons for which it can give no reason," and Amiel in his turn wrote—"What to the intellect is old and worn-out is perennially young and fresh to the heart." Nothing more intensely mystical has been written than Hilary's words on the Incarnation, that crowning wonder of the Spirit. And Victorinus followed with his utterance about the Divine Silence which is broken by the Voice of Christ, whose instant echo is the *Vox vocis*, the Spirit's antiphon. This entire epoch is fulfilled in

Ambrose and his famous protégé, Augustine, whom we may almost style the Father of Christian Mysticism. "God is Love" is Augustine's favourite aphorism; and hence the Spirit too is Love, and forms the atmosphere of God.

Dr. Watkin-Jones tells us that Augustine heralded Mysticism, and Harnack sees one sweeping movement from Augustine to the Reformation. Augustine's thought of Love became more and more the key to the essential meaning of the Spirit. The theology of Mysticism is, in short, summed up in Love. He who would understand Mysticism must drink deep of Augustine. To the Mystics, the Spirit is God's Love immanent in the world, sanctifying men by instilling into their hearts the passion of Love to God. Christ's ministry accordingly was an outpouring of Love, always Love. "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much." Perhaps the mediaeval mystics forgot exact theological distinctions, for they assigned all forgiveness and justification to the Spirit as His work. We have once already recalled how St. Francis sings in impassioned strains—"Love sets my heart on Fire." It is here

indeed that the mediaeval mystic becomes most impressive, in identifying the Spirit with Love.

But let us turn now from these references to the mode in which the doctrine of the Spirit has throughout attached itself to mystical devotion. It may be admitted that a case can be made out for the mere general proposition that, throughout early, mediaeval, and modern Mysticism, the Christian faith in the Spirit merges indefinitely into mystical experiences. But what sort of Mysticism is meant? It is undeniable that there have been many excesses. Christian doctrines have sometimes suffered. The idea of the Church has too often been obscured. Asceticism on the one hand and Libertinism on the other have been too frequently developed under the name.

It is proper, therefore, that we should seek for some definition, in dealing with the relation between Mysticism and the Spirit, so that if possible we may encourage the devout believer to realise that Christian Mysticism is a legitimate factor in the religious life.

At the outset, it must be owned that

Mysticism has suffered and continues to suffer from strong prejudice and even from dislike. There are several reasons, which deserve to be considered in our endeavour to arrive at a clearer comprehension of the subject.

1. THE PREJUDICE OF THE BUSY MAN

The hurry and bustle of modern life have largely hindered the ordinary man from dwelling on the deeper things of the Spirit. It is not always want of time, but rather also dislike of introspection, which creates the difficulty. Mysticism is understood to call for the practice of contemplation of the Self and of God, with the aim of coming into spiritual contact with God. It is the "practice of the presence of God." It demands leisure, quietness, concentration. These are hard to get, even if they were longed for in such a quest. The practical man, however, finds it undesirable to withdraw himself from business and daily habit, because these form the staple of his life. Any serious interruption from illness, social duties, and the like, becomes distasteful and fatiguing. Nor is hurry a phenomenon

of business life alone. It faces us in almost every region. And we have come to feel that it is what ought to be, or at any rate what must be. Thus the call to retirement, solitude, reflection, is tacitly rejected, and men look coldly upon those who do not keep pace with the quick-march of our day. Most of us indeed are not unwilling to be called "busy men," and would a little resent the suggestion that we are ever idle or quiescent—that we ever retire into a solitary place to pray.

2. THE THEOLOGICAL PREJUDICE

The dogmatic or theological prejudice is curiously strong in some quarters, so much so as almost to discourage any serious inquiry into the meaning of the term. A striking instance can be found by any reader who will turn to Dr. Hodge's bulky volumes,[1] and examine the section on Mysticism. Dr. Hodge's conclusions are expressed in a very trenchant style. He admits indeed that "the Lord promised to send the Spirit who was to abide with the Church, to dwell in His people, to be their

[1] Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, ed. 1871, vol. i. p. 61 ff.

teacher, and to guide them into the knowledge of all truth." One might well suppose that this is really a mystical theory, because a divine Spirit who dwells in the believer represents an inward illumination, and the mystic aims at nothing more or less than that. But our author is keenly aware of errors and excesses which have come to many seekers after the Inward Light, the Inward Voice, the Inward Vision. It is against these errors that his condemnation is really directed. To the claim that such intimate experience is valid he opposes the emphatic reply that "the Bible gives no support to the mystical doctrine of the inward, supernatural, objective revelation of truth made by the Spirit to every man." He admits indeed that Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Gerson, Thomas à Kempis, and others "were a great blessing to the Church." The *Imitation of Christ*, he declares, "has diffused itself like incense through all the aisles and alcoves of the Universal Church." Yet in his opinion Christian people should be cautioned against the fundamental practice of those remarkable men. Their methods, he thinks, are not

for the typical believer, who must rigidly confine himself to the written Word.

This condemnation of Mysticism, however, is evidently based on the belief that it is inconsistent with the honour due to the Holy Spirit as our Guide into all truth. If, therefore, we come to the conclusion that Mysticism, shorn of extravagances, is actually a mode of the Spirit's work in the believer, Dr. Hodge's criticisms lose any relevance except where manifest extravagances and delusions can be reasonably shewn to exist. There are mystics and mystics. And the great mystics are not always at their highest level. It is for the Christian judgment to separate the good from the bad, to " try the spirits."

3. THE RITSCHLIAN PREJUDICE

Far more serious is the stern condemnation of Mysticism by the whole school of Ritschl, though it includes in it some thoughtful and devout writers who are by no means in complete accord with Ritschl's emphatic opinions on this question. His rejection of Metaphysics is well known, and it includes Mysticism as " the practice

of Neo-Platonic Metaphysics." He defines Mysticism as "the intention to transcend the individuality of the spiritual life . . . and to retire into one's own real actual self." One may at this point ask how it is possible to retire into any kind of Self whatever without preserving an individuality, and that of so definite and marked a kind as to offer even larger opportunities of Christian usefulness. Harnack's exposition is clearer and more instructive. Mysticism to him is "the conscious, reflective, Catholic piety, which just by reflection and contemplation wishes to intensify itself; Catholicism knows only it, or *fides implicita*." It is due, he thinks, to a combination of Augustine and the Areopagite, vivified by self-committal to Christ as taught by Bernard. It starts from pantheism, and aims at acosmism or the negation of a real world. The Unio Mystica is the chief Protestant factor akin to this religious phenomenon; it is a union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in a mystical, that is, an indefinable way. In Calvin's teaching this is modified to express the union of Christ with His Church. And that latter Union came to mean Marriage, in the spiritual

sense of the close relation between the Divine Bridegroom and the Church—" the Bride, the Lamb's Wife."

Harnack's account of Mysticism breathes probably the utmost severity of any among the more prominent Ritschlians. It suggests apparently a Romanist origin; it traces the pedigree still further back to the pretended Dionysius; it charges Mysticism with the attempt to obliterate a real world; and it links it with the emotional metaphor of the " Bridegroom " and the " Bride."

Dr. Garvie agrees with Ritschl, whose special exponent he is, that Mysticism must be rejected in so far as it employs the Neo-Platonic idea of God, and the method of absorption in God. He also rejects, with Ritschl, the alleged mystical appeal to the " Subconscious." But he acknowledges that men desire to have " a close present communion with God in the living Christ." To this desire, he grants that Mysticism is a witness. And he affirms, as against Professor Orr, that Ritschl also recognises " a real Presence, an actual operation of God, in communion with God, or the Spirit's action." Unfortunately, Ritschl does not

accept the ordinary view of the Spirit, for to him the Spirit is no more than God's knowledge of Himself, as well as "an attribute of the Christian community." Is not this practical denial of the Holy Spirit the secret of his hostility to Mysticism? Negatively also it amounts to a recognition that Mysticism, in its proper place and function, is truly the realisation of the Spirit as that Power which searches out "the deep things of God."

A similar distaste for Mysticism may be detected in Dr. Denney, of whose theological eminence no doubt can be raised. And here also there may be observed the same lowered and cautious doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In particular, he emphatically denies the idea of the Unio Mystica: "Our Union with Christ is not metaphysical or mystical, but moral. . . . When Paul exclaimed, 'It is no more I that live, but Christ liveth in me,' he was throwing out words at one of these permanently inexpressible things." . . . "The Spirit is not an object of faith like Christ or God, it is an experience which comes to people through faith." . . . "There is no justification . . . for representing the Spirit as a

third person in the same sense as God and Christ." He expressly anticipates that his view "will be charged with ignoring the personality of the Spirit."[1] Certainly there was in such an utterance a challenge to such an inference. The immediate point, however, is that this obvious dislike of Mysticism is accompanied by a reduced doctrine of the Spirit, and the practical rejection of the idea of an essential Trinity.

The same aversion to Mysticism appears in Dr. H. R. Mackintosh's admirable volume on the *Person of Jesus Christ.* "The danger which has long shadowed faith in the exalted Christ is that of an unbridled and capricious mysticism." On the other hand, he recognises the place of the Spirit in a Trinity, in opposition to Weinel's affirmation that Paul "could not distinguish the Son from the Holy Ghost." And he quotes the Pauline utterance, "The Lord is that Spirit," in order to interpret it by the following clause, "Where the Spirit *of* the Lord is, there is liberty." Yet it is difficult to see how Mysticism can do such injustice to the exalted Christ without inflicting equal wrong on the Spirit.

[1] Denney, *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation,* pp. 304-311.

For Dr. Mackintosh declares that the true relation between the Spirit and the Christ is one not of identity but of vital unity.[1]

Dr. Ernst Troeltsch

The late distinguished Dr. Ernst Troeltsch, of whose general system we have a reliable account by the late Baron von Hügel as well as from Dr. R. S. Sleigh, is another example of the theological prejudice against Mysticism, associated with a lowered doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Troeltsch distinguishes three types of the religious life among Christians—the Church Type, representing the early Middle Ages, the Sect Type which is partly mediaeval and partly Reformed, and the Mystical Type which is entirely due to Protestantism.

His description of the Third or Mystical Type is so interesting for the present discussion that some larger space may be given to it. It is perhaps the most powerful indictment recently laid against Mysticism in religion.

The Mystic Type, according to Troeltsch, rejects every law, and clings to a world-

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, *Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 378; cf. p. 59.

renouncing filial devotion to God, and to a fraternal love that binds person to person, and consumes the intervening world with its heat. Mysticism is "insistence on immediacy, interiority, presence of Religious Experience." It presupposes rites, myths, or dogmas, but either reacts against them as do the Reformers, or supplements them by "a personal and vital excitation." It is characterised by enthusiastic or even orgiastic exaltation; by vision or hallucination; by religious subjectivism and spiritualism; by concentration upon the purely interior and only emotionally apprehensible. The phenomena, however, are almost always just expansions of the common Faith. But these symptoms may pass into a peculiar realism of intercourse with God, and may even become erotic; or, again, into Spiritualism which ignores the sensible world or repels it by ascetic rules and practices. It may then become either Pantheism or Dualism. Or, it may develop an Asceticism which destroys the world, or a Libertinism which treats all finite things as indifferent and negligible.

Paul, he asserts, took over Mysticism with the ancient Mysteries, which Troeltsch

thinks were then adapted as Christian Sacraments. Paul therefore is the real founder of Christian Mysticism, and the Fourth Gospel developed it, using the "mystic key-words—flesh, spirit; darkness, light; allegory, letter." The Church Type itself is tinctured with Mysticism, but it has proved less susceptible in fact, because it is more comprehensive, because it develops greater social power and passion, because it is capable of emerging, erelong, into a wide confederation of Churches, and because Religious Life can never dispense with a Church in order to propagate the Kingdom of God.[1]

Such is a rough report of this trenchant criticism of Mysticism, its principles and its practice. The corresponding lowering of the Holy Spirit will be found in Troeltsch's pronouncements which, summed up, declare that the Holy Spirit is but a term for God as "holy Love," and that it differs not at all from the spirit in man himself. Thus he regards the Trinity as a product of mythology. There is no "essential" Trinity; an "economic" Trinity can be

[1] For above I am indebted to von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 144-194.

based on the New Testament teaching, and this for the present day will suffice. It may serve as a working formula to designate God's activity in the world.

4. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PREJUDICE

Mysticism is now attracting the earnest attention of psychologists. Two of the more prominent experts may be referred to. The first is Dr. J. B. Pratt, whose volume on the *Psychology of the Religious Consciousness* contains a large section, about one-fourth of the book, dealing very carefully with the subject. His treatment is not unsympathetic, yet he is evidently, as a scientific student of Mysticism, a little perplexed. He points out that mysticism is the worst used and most overworked of English words. He carefully guards against being understood to speak as a theologian. He defines Mysticism as " the sense of the presence of a being or reality through other means than the ordinary perceptive processes or the reason." Apparently he includes within its factors the experience of telepathy, which he regards as an established fact. In its " milder " forms, Dr. Pratt

appears to see no great objection to Mysticism when it occurs among religious people possessing an ordinary and stable temperament. But in cases where the temperament is not stable, it produces abnormal results, such as a sense of the "beyond," and the phenomenon of "ecstasy." These and other eccentricities have led to its being misunderstood. Like Ritschl, he thinks that the prejudice is partly due to its Catholic associations with saints, ascetics, and celibates. The "milder" forms have not much interest for psychology, because they are generally attributable to an acute sense of the divine presence. They can often be traced to some history of childhood and adolescence. They include a not unwelcome feeling of *bien être*—of joy, peace, "losing one's self," "getting out of one's self." Sometimes there is a special experience of Light, of "Sweetness" (as for example in odours), and the like. There is in certain cases a peculiar emotion which is neither joy nor sorrow, affecting the lachrymal glands, and issuing in tears which are followed by a sense of "great refreshment." But, as the mystic Tauler declares, the experience is

not to be described fully in ordinary language. It is something known but incapable of utterance. This recalls St. Paul's famous phrase—"Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth." Dr. Pratt does not quote the Apostle's words. But he refers to the *Theologia Germanica*, which puts the issue very clearly—"It may be asked, what is the state of a man who followeth the true Light? . . . I answer truly . . . he who is not such a man can neither understand it nor know it; and he who is such a man . . . cannot utter it, for it is unspeakable."

Yet it would appear, from Dr. Pratt's questionnaire, that what is known chiefly in these commoner mystical experiences is described by his correspondents as "Light." Tauler, however, dwells on "Sweetness." Both are common in mystical writings. Bernard of Clairvaux has given us the exquisite hymn :—

> "Jesu, the very thought of Thee
> With sweetness fills my breast."

And we are reminded too of the matchless phrase of Scripture, "Thy Name is as ointment poured forth."

Yet this mood has its inevitable reactions,

and the mystics often lament their pain, their thirst for God, their tears and sleepless nights. Dr. Pratt is plainly sympathetic so far, although it must be assumed that he has a psychological theory which will account for all.

In point of fact, he declares that there is a mystic period of the individual's life during which similar phenomena may safely be expected. This " mystic age " belongs rather to the last years of adolescence than to extreme age or early childhood and youth. Its experiences are, we are told, fostered by poor health and by sickness, although there are here many exceptions.

Finally, the expert announces that in the strict sense Mysticism is not rational, and may indeed become positively irrational. In other words, " a little Mysticism is a dangerous thing," but a great deal of Mysticism may result in unbalancing the mind.

If Dr. Pratt deals gently with the Mystic, while plainly discouraging Mysticism, the same cannot be said of the conclusions announced in the latest psychological treatise—that of J. H. Leuba (1925). Himself a pioneer in the department of the

Psychology of Religion (his first book on the subject goes back to 1896), he has now disclosed his mature decisions on Mysticism. He has done so with a fullness and thoroughness, as well as a frankness, which afford a contrast to the general mass of literature on the subject. *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* gives him an opportunity to restate finally his profound distrust of ordinary religious experience, much more of mystical experience whether Christian or Oriental. It is obviously beyond our limits to attempt even a brief outline of Leuba's judicial and thorough investigation. But his results may at any rate be stated, though at the risk of incompleteness.

To Leuba, this is no mere question of any one Religion, for every religion has its mystical side. All religions start with some symbolism; they are at the outset objective. But some stop at that stage, while others pass into regions of ecstasy and other subjective phenomena. This is, of course, true of our Christianity; a thoroughly objective religion, it has developed the subjective factor up to a certain point, and (says our author) "Mysticism, in its incipient stages at least, is encouraged

in the Christian Church, but when it assumes the amazing aspects with which the famous mystics have made us familiar, the Church becomes uneasy and watchful." Leuba thus suggests that at a certain point Mysticism becomes anti-Church if not anti-Christian ; for the mystic who claims perfect union with God needs no external authority to confirm what is for him an immediate and independent knowledge. Leuba refers here to the rejection of Mysticism by the school of Ritschl ; and history records how the Church of Rome interposed not seldom to restrain or at any rate to capture the great mystics.

Leuba's position is that, as pure subjective experience, the mystical attitude becomes amenable to scientific psychology. He subjects the main claims of Mysticism therefore to a thorough criticism. All of them, he contends, can be fully accounted for on psychological principles without demanding any reference to the question of supernatural religion. The Presence of God, for instance, so often and so constantly appealed to, becomes intelligible as auto-suggestion or reminiscence of latent emotions. The experience of rapturous

union is traceable to repressions of a physical kind. And in a similar way, one alleged mystical phase after another is disposed of, until the verdict seems unavoidable. The verdict is that Mysticism is entirely man-made, and takes its votary not a single step beyond himself. Leuba frankly admits that his conclusions may be applied not only to religious Mysticism but also to Religion itself. At the close of the whole inquiry, he says :—

"Is it claimed that this investigation amounts to a proof of the non-existence of God? It amounts in the author's opinion to no more than a demonstration of the total insufficiency of the ground on which rests, on the whole, the belief in the existence of the gods of the religions. . . . We have not presumed to say how the *ultimate* source of the new energies by which the mystic is enriched is to be conceived. . . . We might have used the expression 'subconscious sources of energy.' But that would not have constituted an addition of real knowledge, nor would it have made anything clearer. When these and other things of the same purport have been said, the questions of the ultimate origin and of the nature of God, as raised by the philosopher, remain unanswered." [1]

Professor Pratt's reply to Leuba amounts

[1] *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, p. 317.

to the usual attitude and answer of Pragmatism. Leuba's position is on the whole "unassailable," but man cannot afford to do without Mysticism. After all, psychology is only the *description* of religious experience, not an explanation. Every age has need of "the contemplative life"; "the soul needs a larger draft of air, a less circumscribed horizon. . . . It needs a chance for spreading its wings . . . and for quiet inner growth, which is best to be found in that group of somewhat indefinite but very real experiences—aspiration, insight, contemplation—which may well be called the mystic life." [1]

The question thus raised is too large for discussion in this place; but the whole position makes clear the prejudice, as we have called it, against Mysticism itself. The recent volume of Principal Selbie, on *The Psychology of Religion*, is well fitted to reassure the interested reader, for it points out first, that a certain element of Mysticism is essential to all religion, and secondly, that the fuller development in the great mystics is not to be ascribed simply to education and auto-suggestion.

[1] Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 455, 479.

The mystics are "the seers of our world." And what they see is really there.[1]

The account has been balanced by Principal Galloway thus: "The danger of Mysticism is, that it weakens the rational and practical side of religion, and inclines to substitute pantheistic absorption for spiritual communion. Its strength lies in its perception, that only through the spiritualised emotions can the depth and inwardness of religion be realised. In this sense, we can agree that there will always be a mystical element in the higher religious life."[2]

Dr. Streeter's Volume on "The Spirit"

Reference has already been made to the collection of papers under the editorial care of Dr. B. H. Streeter, with the general title of *The Spirit*. The writers are specially interested in the co-ordination of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit with the facts of religious life. Two of the papers are from the pen of the late Mr. Clutton-Brock, and deal with "Spiritual Experi-

[1] Selbie, *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 264.
[2] Galloway, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 161.

ence" and with "Matter and Spirit." Unfortunately, the introductory paper, by Professor A. S. Pringle-Pattison, takes a view of the Spirit as inconsistent with the "sublime mysticism" of the conception, and contends that the personality of the Spirit involves the materialising of the idea of God. Popular religion, it is declared, is Arian or even Tritheistic. The formal Trinity of the Christian Creeds is unphilosophical, destroying even the true significance of the Incarnation. For the Incarnation rightly conceived is "God's essential nature," eternally giving and revealing Himself; it is the revelation of Immanence, and the Spirit is no more and no less than that. As an introduction to a volume including very noble utterances of a mystical order, this somewhat pantheistic note is disappointing though not unexpected. If, as appears to be suggested, the doctrine of the Spirit disappears in Mysticism, the difficulties of ordinary belief are increased, and the cherished pieties of Christian prayer and worship assume a furtive aspect. But the belief in a Personal Spirit is at any rate the criterion of Christian Mysticism, with which alone our

present discussion is concerned. And Dr. Streeter's band of writers include more than one distinguished contributor who uses the vocabulary of the Spirit in a way not easily distinguishable from that of orthodoxy, yet revealing a very pronounced Mysticism. For example, Miss Lily Dougall, whose writings have helped and inspired so many, declares that "the goal of the Spirit is to do good, not evil"; and the good is simply the Kingdom of God, hence it will be Christian good; it will be salvation through Christ; it will include all things true and beautiful, and the Kingdom is within us; it is a spiritual Kingdom. This process of salvation embraces certain phenomena of the Religious Life such as "Inward Illumination, Inspired Utterances, Unusual Power, Answers to Prayer." These, no doubt, she too readily refers to philosophy, psychology, and William James. One thing, due to the last-mentioned writer, is significant; she asks, What then is the value of Religious Experience? and answers, It has the value of correspondence of the desire with its satisfaction. That is an echo of the "will or wish to believe," which has not yet been

generally accepted as a sufficient ground. Mysticism is far more than that; at its best, it is reality itself revealed within the soul. That at any rate seems to be a Pauline claim. "It pleased God," he says, "to reveal His Son *in* me" (Gal. i. 15, 16).

This recognition of the Spirit becomes naturally more precise in the paper by Dr. C. Anderson Scott, entitled "What happened at Pentecost." Dr. Scott recognises that the ordinary Christian asks, Can we believe in the Spirit as Personal? and he answers that the Personality of the Spirit is to be verified in experience. It is revealed to us most fully in the Fellowship or *Koinonia* of Christians, and this becomes clear in the sense of sonship in Jesus Christ. The experience is thus a personal experience, a factor in the soul and character of Christians. The editor, Dr. Streeter, on the other hand, closes this interesting volume by asking—"The Church claims to be a body inspired by the Holy Spirit. What is this Holy Spirit? It is no other than the spirit manifested in the life of Christ. If Christ is our portrait of the Father, He is no less our portrait of the Holy Ghost."

It is impossible to leave the question of the prejudices against Mysticism without a reference to Neo-Platonism, because in many minds Mysticism is associated with paganism. On such a topic it is natural to appeal to Dean Inge, as the modern exponent of Christian Mysticism. He is well aware that Plotinus himself, the apostle of Neo-Platonism, stopped short at the gate of the new Christian movement. But the system which Plotinus elaborated out of the teaching of Plato (who was himself no mystic) has created in our religion a factor which enters into its life. All the protests against Mysticism itself are vain. There is in Christ Himself, destitute of Platonic philosophy, the essential outlook of the mystic. Much of our Christian Gospel remains cold until it catches fire from our instinct to seek the True Light. At the outset, however, it is vaguely felt that Plotinus as a pagan thinker is an intruder. Neo-Platonism is a pagan philosophy. It exalts the world at the expense of Man. It asserts even in the most fervent moments of faith the need of a special vision. These and other aspects are apparently discordant with Christianity.

Yet Plotinus wielded an influence over early Christian thought greater than any except that of Augustine. And in his spiritualising of life, and his reference of all life to God, Plotinus comes very near to the Christian mind. It must also be remembered that in our Old Testament there are undoubted traces of Mysticism, as in the emphasis placed on God's being as absolutely spiritual, in the psalmist's cry, "My heart and my flesh crieth out after the living God," and in many similar phrases in the Prophets (especially in Isaiah); and these are almost free from Platonic influences. In the Gospels, also, the keynote of Mysticism is heard in Christ's most famous phrase—"The Kingdom of God is within you." The teaching of Paul and of John alike show this quality. This is a point specially dealt with in Dr. Inge's volume.[1] Plotinus himself was a contemporary of Origen, to whom Christian doctrine owes a heavy but sometimes unacknowledged debt. The fact that Plotinus never entered the Christian Church must not hide from us the spiritual value of his writings. If it be true on the one hand

[1] Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, Lect. II.

that he does not in terms embody the Christian conception of the Spirit, yet on the other his attitude to the World implies that its reality is to be found in God, and that truth, goodness, and beauty are things essentially of the Spirit.

Dean Inge's apologia for Neo-Platonism is, for our immediate purpose, summed up at the close of his work on *The Philosophy of Plotinus*.[1] I quote one or two passages :—

"Neo-Platonism . . . requires no apologetic except the testimony of spiritual experience. There is a Christian philosophy of which the same might be said. There are Christians who believe in the divinity of Christ because they have known Him as an indwelling Divine Spirit; who believe that He rose because they feel that He has risen; who believe that He will judge the world because He is already the judge of their own lives. . . . Christianity, however, is essentially a struggle for an independent spiritual life, and it can only exert its true influence in the world when it realises that spiritual things are spiritually discerned. . . . Phrases like these should encourage us to lay aside the fear of Neo-Platonism as if it were a danger to the Spirit. The danger really lies in some recent reactions under the influence of Ritschlianism toward a hard, unlovely historicity, which threatens to

[1] Edition 1923, vol. ii.

strip Christian faith of its glamour and beauty, and convert it into a system of religious economics."

We may now venture to approach the problem with which we started—whether the doctrine of the Spirit as recognised in the Churches is in reality the proper basis of a rational Christian Mysticism, and whether tenable distinctions can be offered between a true and a false Mysticism.

As regards the former point, the various descriptions of Mysticism suggest at any rate a tentative deliverance.

Regarding Dr. Pratt's definition, "Mysticism is the sense of the presence of a being or reality through other means than the ordinary perceptive processes or the reason," it is only right to point out that, as a scientific psychologist, Dr. Pratt is not immediately concerned with the question of the Spirit. But he does not deny the existence of a certain element of knowledge in mystical experience, albeit he pronounces Mysticism to be "not rational." Mysticism, he admits nevertheless, includes certain "cognitive or ideational elements." This is an important concession, because it reminds us that the work of the Spirit

too contains cognitive elements, since the Spirit's office is to guide men into all truth. These ideational factors in normal Mysticism may as readily be referred to the Spirit as to auto-suggestion, which is the customary psychological solution. Dr. Pratt's list of accessories which favour mystic experiences, also, is not inconsistent with a theory of spiritual influences. Such accessories are: the practice of solitude, silence, and stillness; prayer for God's presence; religious music; study of the Scriptures with prayer.[1] This last, especially, reminds us of the Reformed maxim that the Scriptures bring us into intimate contact with the "Testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum," the inward witness of the Spirit. Here we are justified in relating a reasonable Mysticism to the work of the Spirit. To this we may add the evangelical warning that any mystical experience which denies Christ is not of God (1 John iv. 3). Mysticism must not run counter to sound doctrine. Yet the Spirit is within us in order to extend truth's boundaries.

But we have seen that professional Psychology does not meantime yield direct

[1] Pratt, *ut supra*, pp. 359-361.

encouragement to link mystical phenomena with the formal doctrine of the Spirit, or even with Christianity as a special religion. Its general tendency at present is to classify all religious phenomena as subject without distinction to psychological tests which, in the first instance at any rate, exclude the supernatural.

For more sympathetic support we may turn to Dr. Rufus M. Jones, the historian of Quakerism, who says :—

" Mysticism is the type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, in direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine Presence."

To this he adds, however, the more definite statement of R. C. Moberly :—

" Christian Mysticism is the doctrine, or rather the experience, of the Holy Spirit—the realisation of human personality as characterised by and consummated in the indwelling reality of the Spirit of Christ which is God." [1]

Dr. Rufus M. Jones distinguishes two kinds of Mysticism, normal and abnormal, and thereby suggests a test which Dr.

[1] Rufus M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion,* Introduction ; R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality,* p. 312 ff.

Moberly's words supply. Normal Mysticism on this basis will be recognisable by the manifest tokens of the Spirit's presence and guidance. Its pronouncements will offer an immediate judgment of spiritual truth. The criterion thus suggested somewhat resembles the pronouncements of Conscience which the late Dean Rashdall defended as being not simply emotional, but based on the certainty of first principles. In piety, too, there are certainties of experience, such as those of Faith, Prayer, and other high moods of devotion. They are perhaps analogous to William James's transmarginal "More" of consciousness, or to Matthew Arnold's "Power, not ourselves, making for righteousness."

The abnormal type may be dismissed as outside true Christian Mysticism, although such a verdict must be carefully applied in the case of the great mystics. In our own day, abnormal forms generally betray their unspiritual character by separation, and by negation of the Church idea.

In 1914, Dr. W. F. Cobb of London, a learned and thoughtful Anglican, published an important volume on *Mysticism and the Creed.* Mysticism, he holds, may

justly be appealed to in order to "conserve the treasures of past duration, which is what a fixed Creed seeks to do." He is specially concerned with the "Apostles' Creed." The function of Mysticism will be to retain the liberty of the Church to meet the problems of to-day. "What thought loses in concreteness, as in the miraculous (he observes), it regains more fully and invulnerably in Mysticism." What then is Mysticism? He answers :—

> "A well-attested mode of consciousness, occasioned by the desire to conserve the treasures of past duration; arising out of a perception of the 'Unseen Companion,' and effective chiefly in an 'Inner Circle' of believers."

He adds from Fr. Poulain the words: "and unattainable by auto-suggestion."

There follows a specific application of the mystical method to the various articles of the "Apostles' Creed." One naturally turns at once to the Eighth Article—"I believe in the Holy Ghost." Dr. Cobb appeals to the testimony of the famous mystics on this conception of the Divine Spirit. The list of authorities is a long one, and it includes men and women in all the Christian Churches, in whom "the

torch of divine truth has been always kept alight in the darkest days by the Spirit of Truth Himself." It runs from Ignatius of Antioch to William Law, and includes Roman saints and Protestant preachers in a way which reminds us of the late Dr. Alexander Whyte's *Appreciations*. The belief in the Holy Ghost, he argues, is a challenge thrown down to the whole world-wide powers of evil. This divine Spirit is present in the mystics as a power which shall " convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." It is thus as a Power, rather than expressly as a Person, that Dr. Cobb vindicates the Spirit, mainly on the technical ground of the omission, in many passages of Scripture, of the Greek definite article. Yet his suggestion of breadth and vigour in the indefinite locution, and of the relief which it suggests to the doubter, is not lightly to be rejected. For a Spirit everywhere creating and possessing great religious personalities has sufficient evidence of a divine individuality.[1]

Dr. Cobb's work, though perhaps at times somewhat fanciful, exhibits great learning and force. It may at any rate

[1] Dr. W. F. Cobb, *Mysticism and the Creed.*

produce two results: it may present us with the record of a deep faith in the Spirit, and it may help us to identify the Spirit as Divine Love contending against the world's enmity toward God. This second thought pervades all Christian doctrine. The Spirit unites in one Community all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him love the brethren.

The charge against Mysticism that it is not rational, or is even irrational, has perhaps evoked a recent volume called *Rational Mysticism*, by William Kingsland. But any expectation that it will materially strengthen our case is disappointed when we find the volume occupied mainly with a plea for occult science. For us, Mysticism if truly identical with occultism, is necessarily a forbidden and an impossible thing. Mr. Kingsland's plea that the religious experience known as Mysticism can give us authentic knowledge of physical nature, and vehicles of expression for things which natural science has failed to express, is altogether apart from the work of the Spirit. It is to that work that the only true Christian Mysticism can safely be referred, alike for its source and

for its limitations. No doubt there are many who are disposed to echo Mr. Kingsland's claim. But the Wisdom of the Christian Mystic, to quote the familiar words of St. James (iii. 17), is "first pure, then peaceable, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." As the source of "good fruits," it is inspired by that Holy Spirit whose fruit (as the Galatian Epistle recounts) is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 22, 23).

"Against such," adds the apostle, "there is no law." And against a Mysticism which is truly prompted by the Spirit to produce such good fruit, there ought to be no prohibition. The test, therefore, must be its conformity to the Spirit. False Mysticism will more or less be detected by unspiritual pride, by restlessness and eccentricity. Its prototype appeared long ago in Simon Magus. On the other hand, it is not irreverence but simple truth to hail our Lord Himself as the prototype of the true Mystic, who said—"I and the Father are One." The goal of a really rational Mysticism is, through the divine Spirit of

Truth, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

Yet we must not, in any narrow logical spirit, overlook the fact of a universal strain of mystical thought and life which unites in every age the seekers after God. Here we can afford to welcome Dean Inge's definition which declares that "Religious Mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realise the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature; or, more generally, the attempt to realise, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal." [1] Here we are clearly confined to a Mysticism which is religious, not theosophic or occultist. The Christian mystic need not be identified with any methods or results which make religion dependent on the abandonment of reason. Yet he may be found among the humblest followers of Christ, who said—"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." In truth, mystical experience is a gift sometimes withheld from the "wise and prudent," and revealed unto "babes."

[1] Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, Lect. I.

In such cases, questions of "immanence" are far from determining the mystic value of very deep religious experience, which is not really self-conscious but rather a reversion to heaven-sent instinct. This instinct is often a trustworthy token of the work of the Spirit. Nor is Dean Inge's term "attempt" universally descriptive on this point. The Pentecostal outburst was not the result of deliberate design; yet it revealed a mystical experience which remains to this day the starting-point of Christian Mysticism. Nor need we fear to amend Dean Inge's definition in its particular reference to "thought and feeling," by adding also "will." For true Christian Mysticism is not merely a philosophy or an emotion; it is also a Life.

Christian Mysticism is definitely connected with, and conditioned for Christian thinkers by, the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Divine Love, the Love which unites Father and Son in the Trinity, and in that divine Unity makes all Christians brethren, and members one of another. It is the love which unites Christ mystically to His Church. Our Scottish catechism goes further, with a touching and natural sentiment, declaring a Love which

unites the believer to His Lord so inviolably that " his body being still united to Christ " quietly awaits the Resurrection.

Mysticism, as Christian, seeks immediate awareness of God as a God of Love. Since the Spirit is present with the believer as divine Love or Charity in a Fellowship or *Koinonia*, may we not say finally that Mysticism is immediate awareness or experience of the Holy Ghost ? This at any rate is the old prophetic claim : " The Word of the Lord came unto me " ; " the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me " ; " I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."

Nor is it necessary to place the Mystic Quest on inaccessible heights. It is true that the famous mystics often describe a steep ascent and a long and hard way ; but this need not stay the ordinary believer from awaiting and welcoming that influx of the Holy Spirit, in the use of the means of grace, which will surely never be denied to those who only " stand and wait."

Just to have the hearing ear and the understanding heart will, for the average Christian, assure, in his hours of waiting on God, that unmistakable and immediate Gift which is the true Christian Mysticism.

V *Mysticism and the Church*

In discussing now the relations of Mysticism to the Church, it might seem enough to have affirmed the claims of the Holy Spirit to be the source and the standard of a legitimate Christian Mysticism. If, as has been argued, the mystic in that sense is under the influence of intense consciousness of a spiritual universe, and of a spiritual power intimately related to his own being, that might be sufficient to establish his claim to a place in the fellowship of the Church. In any case, whatever in mystical experience is plainly in harmony with the Spirit of God speaking in the Scriptures is surely in harmony with the Church. The affirmation in the "Apostles' Creed" says first, "I believe in the Holy Ghost"; and then, and then only, follows the sentence—"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." But the specific application of such a principle will obviously present difficulties. All that can be attempted now is to refer

rapidly, and very briefly, to prominent examples. There are eminent exponents of Mysticism whose character and testimony have entered into Christian literature and devotion. Their influence on the world's religious life cannot be questioned. Every one of them, however, has cherished some more or less individual view which lies open to criticism from the side of formal doctrine or of orthodox philosophy, not to mention the more recent theories of psychology. But what is now suggested is that they all, more or less, represent, in their several ways and degrees, the presence of the Spirit, and therefore possess a real value and relation for the Church.

Such a theory of course is dependent on a broader and more popular notion of the Church than our necessary ecclesiastical definitions seem to demand. This difficulty, however, is far less felt when we avail ourselves of the familiar conception of the Church Invisible. That in itself is really a mystical idea. It includes within the Church "all such as have been, are, or shall be gathered into one." [1] It is true that the Invisible Church is not recognised

[1] *Westminster Confession of Faith*, xxv. 1.

by the Roman definitions, and the same remark may now perhaps be applied to a large section of the Anglicans. Yet in these very Communions Mysticism has found its warmest welcome, if we except a few scattered decisions. It has, at any rate, seldom been challenged as quite unsound in doctrine. In our Scottish Reformed Church, no doubt, the candidate for ordination was till lately required to renounce a bastard form known as Bourignianism, but no one to-day would associate such an eccentricity with true Mysticism. And whether rejected or approved, the idea of the Church Invisible is indestructible. Any attempt to narrow it is resented nowhere more than in Scotland. In such a comprehensive idea, there is probably no serious conflict on dogma, as such. The Church Invisible is a gathering of souls who are united to each other in Christ as the manifestation of that God who is a Spirit.

It ought never to be a reproach to our Reformed Churches that they can and do appreciate the message of spiritual minds in all ages and sections of the Universal Church. It is accordingly a striking and

impressive quality of the true mystic that he finds practically everywhere among Christians, high and low, his opportunity to experience the "love of the brethren" —the Communion of the Holy Ghost. It has even been suggested that it is in the mystic way, best of all, that the "unity of the Spirit" which is the "bond of peace" can be, and in practice is reached, so that without actual physical amalgamation, separated Churches may enjoy a marvellous intercommunion which escapes from the restraints of denominational distinctions. The seeming contradictions in doctrine may thus find in Mysticism their solvent. Historic antinomies, recorded in history, may become the light and shade in a great picture. A recent writer has endeavoured to prescribe a method by which the history of dogma can be read anew in the atmosphere of the Spirit which is also that of mystical experience. The passage is worth quoting :—

"A useful method of examining the doctrines of the past is to test them by the heresies that were in a sense their foundation; that is, a heresy is most commonly a half-truth stated without its complement. Thus it is always best to see if a heresy cannot be included in some

larger doctrine, where the truth in the heresy will be conserved, and only its partialness and negation will be denied. The two heresies which throw most light upon the Life of God are Sabellianism and Tritheism. . . . Sabellianism makes the Trinity to vanish in unity, there being only one Person, who appears to the world now as Father, now as Son, now as Spirit. And Tritheism is the heresy which is set far in the other extreme, making the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit three distinct and separate individuals; so that it might be conceived that the Father was angry, and the loving Son set Himself the task of appeasing this angry Father.

"The strongest way to meet these two heresies is to hold the two fast together, and to let them correct one another, by the light which the truth in the one throws upon the truth in the other." [1]

It is precisely this kind of reconciling work which more or less consciously engages the mind and temperament of the mystic. It would not be difficult to show how particular Churches are secretly kept together by the almost unnoticed influence of mystic personalities within them. Yet there are dangers also in the method of "pooling" opinions, or striking averages, or seeking

[1] Slattery, *The Light Within: A Study of the Holy Spirit*, p. 124 ff.

the highest common measure. When we turn now to illustrate briefly the claims of the mystics to a recognised place in the Church, we shall bear in mind the lesson of Church History, that Mysticism has always functioned as a refuge from purely logical dogma. It has served as a refuge rather than as a polemic. Its motto might to-day read thus: "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God" (Psalm lxxiii. 16, 17).

AUGUSTINE

To speak of Mysticism and the Church, and ignore Augustine, would be as foolish as to perform *Hamlet* without the Dane. In the evolution of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Augustine played, as we have seen, a decisive part. Harnack, however, has suggested that he did little, by his doctrinal works, to promote piety. And it has sometimes been lamented that he built up a system which appears to magnify the grace of God by a pessimistic depreciation of humanity. Yet his intense realisation of the Spirit of God as covering the whole process of human salvation must surely be

taken along with his sterner propositions, if we are to understand him aright. For Augustine, Salvation is indeed the very essence of an inward and spiritual process. Regeneration, Grace, Prayer, Forgiveness, Life in God, Holiness, are all included in that influence which, like an irresistible tide, floods the human soul. No one who remembers the Shorter Catechism can fail to hear, in its majestic definitions of the way of Salvation, the echo of Augustine's teaching. It is quite true, that those celestial forces have to deal with man as a passive subject. Augustine, even as Calvin in his own day, saw how difficult it is to put first the imitation of Christ. It seems mockery to bid the paralysed man to "arise and walk," unless a new and miraculous strength is at the same time introduced into his helpless limbs. Therefore it is Life, the Life of the Spirit, which Augustine places foremost. This to him is the essential truth of religion. It is that truth which Jesus set forth as His own—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." It is the Hope which breathes in Arthur Hugh Clough's lines :—

" For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flowing in, the main."

Augustine has attached himself to the Church at large chiefly by his combination of the strictest logical doctrine with this intense emotion of faith and love. To some this appears an unnatural union, perhaps because they identify Mysticism with vague indefinite feelings, incompatible with precise doctrinal thought. In reality, however, the sources of mystic experience and those of elaborated doctrine lie near to each other. In a sense perhaps they come into touch. The profoundest doctrines of the Gospel have taken shape out of fluid experiences and devotional phases. And they are constantly in need of being re-vitalised by such factors. That is why the old maxim is still true, that " the heart makes the theologian." [1]

Those who find something unnatural in the fact that the same hand should have penned the treatise *De Trinitate* and the *Confessions* are perhaps labouring under a mistaken idea of Augustine. He

[1] It is *pectus*, not *cor*; hence it means the emotions.

was, intellectually, a strong and steadfast thinker; he was, spiritually, as strong and fervent a believer who had learned to bow his every faculty to the obedience of Christ. In his religious experience he had won a victory by listening to the heavenly Voice. The story is familiar, yet it never tires :—

"I cast myself down under a fig-tree, and gave rein to my tears. . . . To this purpose spake I much to Thee—'And Thou, O Lord, how long? how long, Lord, wilt Thou be angry for ever? O remember not against me former iniquities'—for I felt that I was holden by them. . . . Such words I spake while I wept in most bitter contrition of heart. And lo, from a neighbouring house I heard a voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, singing and oft repeating 'Take, read'; 'Take, read' . . . I arose, interpreting it to be no other than a divine command to open the Book, and read the first chapter I should find. . . . I seized, opened, and read . . . 'put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ' . . . No further would I read, nor was there need; for instantly at the end of this sentence, as though my heart were flooded with a light of peace, all the shadows of doubt melted away."

This emotional being is nevertheless the same who became a bishop and a famous theologian, the same who planned so sternly the constitution and laws of the *Civitas Dei*. But is there really anything in-

consistent? Is not Mysticism in such temperaments the natural relief of logical judgments which otherwise might kill our joy in believing?

Augustine's type is found plainly in St. Paul; his is a Pauline Mysticism. Like that apostle, he is in his religious experience intensely human; he shares the same conflict with the flesh, the same horror of the works of the flesh. In the wasted frame of Paul one might perhaps marvel at such a terror of the body; in the vivid and strenuous life of Augustine the evils of the flesh became only too familiar; thus, his crisis was predominantly physical. He had become fastidious; revelry, carnal self-indulgence, the cruel appeal of the amphitheatre, had surfeited and sickened him. Then that wonderful mother, Monica, rose to his imagination as the opposite of all such unlovely things. Monica and his love for her are surely ample corrections of Augustine's sterner doctrines. Her simplicity and her natural refinement awoke in him higher tastes and passions. These were the passions which are specially met and absorbed by Mysticism; its very phrases sometimes err by reason of that

fact. Our Lord Himself may perhaps have meant this when He said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (St. Matt. xii. 50). Thus Augustine speaks of celestial tastes or savours, of celestial "sight" and "hearing." But his highest and purest experiences were beyond sensuous expression, as may be seen in this well-known passage:

> "Sometimes Thou admittest me to an affection, very unusual, in my inmost soul; rising to a strange sweetness; if that were perfected in me, I know not what could ever be which this life would not be."

That, doubtless, is the mystical union with God, exceeding the vision of God itself. "The Man Christ Jesus," he says, "became a partaker of our own mortality, that He might make us partakers of His divinity." The Union with God is thus also Union with Christ, and both are enjoyed in the Unity of the Spirit.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Let us turn to one of a different type in respect that his natural instinct was for the monastic life, and it was only imperious

necessity which drew him into great Church affairs. Bernard of Clairvaux (the " Sunny Vale ") was really a man of quiet rural activities, rejoicing in country life and labour, interested in every daily duty in his monastery, and ready to give cheerful exhortations to his company of friends. Necessity, however, called him forth in defence of the recognised Faith (as in the case of Abelard), and in pursuance of a great Crusade. His deepest vitality was nevertheless of a mystical kind. No one has fought harder for the principle that the foundation of saving knowledge is an inward conviction of truth. Faith as a definite principle for him springs out of a willing submission to divine Revelation. Intellect comes later to supply exact knowledge; but Faith has already supplied vision. This insight or vision is deeper than mere opinions, deeper than hard-won learning. It constitutes the essence of true piety, and it makes us, learned and unlearned alike, brethren in the simplicity that is in Christ.

Simplicity of life and comradeship in Christ gave to St. Bernard a benignant character, preventing his Mysticism from

becoming spiritual pride or foolish laxity of conduct. It is true that he disparages the bodily side of life, but in this he is at one with the average solitary; yet much of his asceticism is little other than the plea for a sound mind in a sound body. Where he steps forward into a clear mystical light is in his aspiration toward a life not merely simple and healthy (like Kingsley's "muscular Christianity"), but also dedicated and heavenly. He revels in descriptions of that angelic ideal. The celestial life, as he pictures it, is one of absolute and unfatigued attainment. In it, labour is at an end; intuition brings knowledge without effort, and especially the highest kind, viz. Knowledge of God. Yet even here and now the human soul may, by meditation and prayer, gain some measure of that heavenly frame. There is a rapture which they who wait and pray may know while still in the body. It comes from the purified and expectant vision of the soul.

The Mysticism of St. Bernard of Clairvaux is singularly free from excesses and extravagances. In his letters and sermons there is little of the claim to ecstasy, or to those more sensuous phenomena which appear in

some mystical biographies. His healthy country life and labour excluded such experiences. He is also very humble in his claims; not for him were those higher reaches of contemplation. The real cheerfulness and even joyousness of his temperament move us deeply in such hymns as we find in our books of praise, representing a substantial output of religious verse. While his namesake of Morlaix strikes often a despondent note, our Bernard sings for us happily :—

> "Jesu, the very thought of Thee
> With sweetness fills my breast,
> But sweeter far Thy face to see,
> And in Thy presence rest."

or again—

> "O Jesu, King most wonderful,
> Thou Conqueror renowned,
> Thou Sweetness most ineffable,
> In whom all joys are found."

or the unforgettable—

> "Jesu, thou joy of loving hearts,
> Thou fount of life, Thou light of men,
> From the best bliss that earth imparts,
> We turn unfilled to Thee again."

With such treasures of spiritual song has Bernard of Clairvaux enriched the Church. And other such gifts for worship and medi-

tation have flowed from the same mystical fount.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

To omit St. Francis of Assisi in such a discussion would be unpardonable, even though we in our day may see a great gulf between him and the more formal Society into which his descendants have been organised. His is a permanent figure not in religion only, but also in literature. He belongs undeniably to the Universal Church. In a sense he is the typical mystic of the people. He left all and followed Christ. Any sketch of his career would be superfluous when we have so large a record available to the general reader. But in him we encounter not the ecclesiastic or the dogmatist, but the average human being; not the monk, but the brother of all living creatures, rational or irrational; not the doctor of theology, but the simplest of pupils in the school of Jesus. His Mysticism spreads widest of any over every form of life created by God, and has its message for all the Churches and for all humanity. The central motive is utter sacrifice for the love of Jesus. It is the

Divine Love which we have found abiding in the Holy Spirit, which drives him forth in strictest poverty to obey the command—"As ye go preach, saying, the Kingdom of heaven is at hand; heal the sick . . . freely ye have received, freely give . . . provide neither silver nor gold." So he wandered forth, derided at first and slandered, but preaching "in words like fire, penetrating the heart." Fire indeed was in his heart; it was the fire of love for mankind and for all living things, as embraced in the Son of Man. Like his Master, he loved all Nature. "He would remain" (so we are told) "in contemplation before a flower, an insect, or a bird . . . he was concerned that the plant should have its sunshine, the bird its nest." In this last respect he anticipated science, and consecrated it. He would also naïvely preach to "my little sisters the birds." But this was surely his way to reach all men and women who love nature. It was a subtle imitation of Him who said —"Consider the lilies! Consider the fowls of the air!"

Does any Church propose to unchurch St. Francis? The most divergent religionists have rather taken him to their hearts.

THOMAS À KEMPIS

The *Imitation of Christ* is perhaps the most widely known book, next to the Bible, among persons of all the Christian Societies. It is found in the homes of the poorest, as in those of the richest. Dean Inge thinks it inferior to that famous mystical classic, *Theologia Germanica*, in respect that it is so individualistic. Mystical, he declares, it really is *not*, for Mysticism is one lifelong effort to reach union with God ; its endeavour is to say, like St. Paul, " I am nothing." And Thomas à Kempis is bent on safeguarding his own soul from the world. But Dr. Inge's definition betrays his dominant passion for Plato and the idea of an ultimate absorption in the divine. Thomas à Kempis, on the other hand, has a wonderful appeal for lonely and sad persons, for such as have Newman's early bent to the solitary life. Yet no one worth reckoning has ever felt this to be a repellent feature. No doubt the *Imitation* is more welcome in times of disappointment with the daily lot than in days of high hope and eager youth. George Eliot is frequently quoted in proof of that fact : " It

flashed through her mind that all the miseries of her young life had come from fixing her heart on her own pleasure, as if that were the central necessity of the universe." Thus runs the familiar passage in the *Mill on the Floss*. George Eliot nevertheless finds the message of the *Imitation* a discouraging one; the old monk's outpourings, she thinks, teach that "Renunciation remains sorrow, though a sorrow borne willingly." Yet she admits (as who that has suffered and is strong will deny?) that his lesson of Renunciation is one which brings consolation and a higher strain of character.

To many minds, however, the charm of the little book is its healthy Mysticism. Thomas indeed may be called the "Mystic of Common Sense," for everywhere he suggests to the sympathetic reader more than Bernard's celestial dreams, more than Augustine's passionate monologues, more than the simple devotions and austerities of him of Assisi. There is in him a holy shrewdness, as in his praise of solitude as an antidote to distracting company: "In thy chamber thou shalt find what abroad thou shalt too often lose"—

"Shut thy door upon thee, and call unto thee Jesus, thy Beloved." He knew what it was to lose in an hour's gossip what cost many hours of prayer to recapture; "why," he asks, "do we so willingly speak and talk one with another, when notwithstanding we seldom cease our converse before we have hurt our conscience?" That is not a morose temper, but a keen insight, which makes him confess—"Oftentimes I could wish that I had held my peace, and that I had not been in company."

It is surely in the hour of prayer and solitude that the presence of the Spirit may be expected. Here there is a distant echo in Wordsworth's plaint—"The world is too much with us." A true feature of Christian Mysticism is just this recognition of our Lord's own precept—"Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray. . . ."

Many methods of prayer are offered in religious books; but all must begin with this personal approach to the unseen and ineffable. But there is a healthy shrewdness in it, too. And we find a similar good sense in other well-known maxims of the *Imitation*: "It is expedient for thee to flee

to humble and outward works"; "The things a man cannot amend in himself or in others he ought to suffer patiently until God order them otherwise"; "By useful work thou shalt greatly stop the way against (temptations)"; "Never be entirely idle, but either be reading, or writing, or meditating something for the public good."

But it will be said, This is not Mysticism; it is merely Christian common sense! Yet listen to the same patient voice:—

"If thou seekest Jesus in all things, thou shalt surely find Jesus. But if thou seekest thyself, thou shalt also find thyself, but to thine own destruction. . . ." "Nothing is sweeter than love (of Jesus), nothing more courageous, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven and earth; because love is born of God and cannot rest but in God, above all created things. . . ." "Love of Jesus is active, sincere, affectionate, pleasant, amiable; courageous, faithful, patient, prudent, long-suffering, manly, and never seeking itself."

It is an echo of St. Paul's rhapsody on Charity; but it comes from a Brotherhood of the fifteenth century. And it reminds us that the Love or Charity thus praised is indeed the Communion of the Holy Ghost.

THE REFORMATION

The Reformation might have been expected to create a gulf between such mystical writers, flourishing as they did within the Roman Church. But Luther at all events brought with him a deep current of mystical feeling, and Lutheran piety still harbours within its worship and religious experience much that reveals the distinctive mystical sense of the immediacy of things divine. Dean Inge no doubt describes Luther as a foe to Mysticism; but this is chiefly because of some passing controversial expressions, like the reference to Sebastian Frank as "an enthusiast or Spiritualist, who is content with nothing but Spirit, Spirit, Spirit, and cares not at all for Bible, Sacrament, or Preaching." [1] On the other hand, Luther never retracted his words of strong admiration for Tauler and for the *Theologia Germanica*. Indeed, his first use of the press was to publish an edition of the latter work, declaring that, next to the Bible and St. Augustine, he can mention no book from which he has learned more of the nature of

[1] Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 196.

God, Christ, man, and all other things than from this book. It is easy to see what he was thinking of in his characteristic censure of Frank; it was the mere selfish abandonment to vague emotional ideas. That was a temptation to which Luther himself was liable throughout his life; but the intensity of his own faith made God so near to him that it prompted to a quickened moral effort. Luther's famous appeal to the Scriptures at Worms was, after all, a mystical note. His passionate realisation of Christ, as transferring to the penitent sinner His own divine personality, is another. And the whole-hearted love of and dependence on Christ which characterises the entire Reformation teaching is common to Luther and Calvin alike. Certainly, there were, among the Reformed, extravagances which caused scandal, disorder, and even bloodshed. The vagaries of Anabaptism were too often ascribed to Mysticism. But history now fully recognises that such excesses were a caricature of the "Wisdom which is from above." Of the nobler forms of mystical intuition Calvin declared—"Such is our persuasion that it demands no reasons. Such is our knowledge that

the best reason finds it sound, because the mind finds rest more secure in it than in any reasons; and finally such is our experience that it cannot have its birth from aught else than a celestial revelation." [1] Calvinism itself has not robbed us of the experience which makes the mystic, but has rather purified and deepened it.

JEREMY TAYLOR

In Jeremy Taylor's works, especially in the *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, we have a treasury of grave and edifying Mysticism. That volume is steeped in ardent devotion to the spiritual life, while exhibiting also that practical and sober piety which is a warrant against empty emotion. To him a holy life meant three things—the religious use of time, the cultivation of a certain purity of intention, and the practice of the presence of God. The last-mentioned discipline is, of course, the touchstone of Mysticism. It brings before us the truth that God is to be encountered everywhere. Nature reveals this presence to the devout sense; the "flower in the crannied wall"

[1] Calvin, *Institutio*, i. 5.

tells us what God and Man is. Our neighbour in his very need of us discloses the divine appeal. All events in history or in daily life tell us He is there, and personal religious experience brings us incessantly into contact with His Spirit. Thus every human creature, and even the lower animals, can make God near to us. Every part of nature is consecrated; we are always on holy ground. This presence is not, however, a source merely of fear or of awe, but also of spiritual joy. It brings a reinforcement of soul against temptation. Associated with the constant presence of God is the Divine Spirit, as is set forth in the following characteristic passage :—

" God is especially present in the hearts of His people *by His Holy Spirit*; and indeed the hearts of holy men are temples in the truth of things, and, in type and shadow, they are heaven itself. For God reigns in the hearts of His servants; there, is His kingdom. . . . This is the religion and worship of God in the temple. The temple itself is the heart of man, Christ is the high-priest, who from thence sends up the incense of prayers and joins them to His own intercessions, and presents all together to His Father. And the Holy Ghost, by His dwelling there, hath also consecrated it as part of His temple. And God dwells in our heart by faith, and Christ

by His Spirit, and the Spirit by His purities; so that we are also cabinets of the mysterious Trinity. . . . It is heaven in a looking-glass, dark but yet true, representing the beauties of the soul, and the graces of God, and the images of His eternal glory, by the reality of a special presence."

WILLIAM LAW

Of the same sober yet moving style is the teaching of William Law, who, though saturated with the spirit of Jacob Böhme, was all his life a devoted servant of the Church of England. His *Serious Call* is a classic of the devout life. Its keynote is Prayer. The consecrated life is one of prayer, both public and private; but it is to private prayer that he devotes most of his writings. Prayer is "the desire of the soul turned to God." "This desire," he writes in a work on *The Spirit of Prayer*,[1] "brings the soul to God, and God into the soul; it unites with God, it coöperates with God, and is one life with God." In the same work he develops the typical mystic ideal of worship as the realisation of the gospel *within* the worshipper. The true temple of God is

[1] See p. 200, *note.*

within us. This passage deserves to be transcribed :—

"This pearl of eternity is the Church, or temple of God within thee, the consecrated place of divine worship, where, alone, thou canst worship God in Spirit and in truth—in Spirit, because thy spirit is that alone in thee which can unite and cleave unto God, and receive the working of His Divine Spirit upon thee—in truth, because this adoration in spirit is that truth and reality of which all outward forms and rites, though instituted by God, are only the figure for a time ; but this worship is eternal. . . . The holy mysteries are celebrated, or rather opened in life and power. There the Supper of the Lamb is kept ; the bread which cometh down from heaven, that giveth life to the world, is thy true nourishment, all is done and known in real experience, in a living sensibility of the work of God in the soul. There the birth, the life, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ are not merely remembered but inwardly found and enjoyed in the real estate of thy soul, which has followed Christ in the resurrection."

MYSTICISM IN SCOTLAND

Scotland has furnished evidence of the mystical temperament, especially in the seventeenth century. Opinions of course will differ as to the significance and value

of the struggle between Prelacy and Presbytery, which was perhaps in some measure a struggle with the deep-seated atavism in favour of submission to Rome. Samuel Rutherford is a prominent example of Scottish religious devotion, which in many of his letters exhibits the type of experience due to the inward vision. The keynote is a consuming passion for Christ, carried to a height which rivals some classical expressions of love and self-dedication. Modern taste sometimes cavils at his use of certain mystical metaphors; but this absorbing passion for Jesus has had its analogues in all the divided Churches. Many living witnesses are in a position to testify to the emotional atmosphere of old Scottish Communions. The *Biographia Presbyteriana* supplies specimens of the homely mysticism of sufferers in Covenanting days, as well as of a pietism which consecrated men of God in solitary manses and cottages. Of the real experience of the Spirit in such cases it is difficult to raise a doubt, crude and unpolished as were some of the utterances. The Scottish peasantry seldom hesitated to ascribe to such cases the quality of inspiration; the

preacher during many dark days of persecution was listened to as a prophet. And intense reverence followed the martyr to his grave.

Of James Renwick a touching and characteristic incident is recorded in the quaint memoirs of Helen Alexander Currie :—

"And when Mr. Renwick was execute, I went and saw him in prison; and I said, *Ye will get the white robes*, and he said, *And palms in my hands*. And when he was execute, I went in to the Greyfriars Yard, and I took him in my arms till his cloathes were taken off, and I helped to wind him before he was put in the coffin." [1]

And Hew M'Kail's last words shew a remarkable grandeur :—

"And now I leave off to speak any more to creatures, and begin my intercourse with God which shall never be broken off:—Farewell, father and mother, the world and all delights; farewell, meat and drink; farewell, Sun, Moon, and Stars. Welcome, God and Father; welcome, sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant; welcome, blessed Spirit of Grace, and God of all consolation; welcome, glory; welcome, eternal life; and welcome, death." [2]

This partly sombre, partly joyous strain may be heard even in more recent days in

[1] *Passages in the Life of Helen Alexander . . . of Pentland*, p. 13.

[2] *Scots Worthies*, on Hew M'Kail.

Scottish theology, as in Macleod Campbell's mystical theory of Jesus as "the one sinner and meeting-place of sin," or in Edward Irving's impassioned appeal to the Divine Spirit in the unknown tongues. In Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, also, there are many tokens of sympathy with Mysticism, even though it might be unconscious. There is one passage, in a letter to Dr. Chalmers, in which he pleads for the gifts of the Spirit. "Surely," he urges, "the Westminster divines did not exhaust the Bible; and if they had the Spirit, surely the divines of our day are not excluded from the Spirit, and if so, they ought to thank God for what light was seen before, and press on to further light in the strength of the Spirit." And in the same half-apologetic way he records on his journey in Italy in 1827—"I have been reading a very curious book lately by Law, the author of the *Serious Call*; it is entitled *The Spirit of Prayer*; most mystical it is, but most beautiful. It is not the gospel, but I think it may be profitably read by those who know the gospel." [1]

There is perhaps room for a study of Scottish Mysticism, if only to shew how the

[1] *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen*, 1878, pp. 90, 141.

perfervid spirit of the Scot is allied to spiritual thought and emotion throughout history, and to suggest that the hidden bond of Union among the separated Scottish Churches may in the last resort be found there.

"JOHN INGLESANT"

The narrow compass of these lectures forbids any extensive review of the relations between Mysticism and the Church. But the few illustrations already attempted may be associated with a more modern example. The revival of an interest in Mysticism in recent years has nowhere been more impressive than in the classic romance of *John Inglesant*, by John Henry Shorthouse, published well-nigh sixty years ago. It has proved to be a landmark in the history of religion in England. Its influence, often unrecognised, can be traced in far-off regions and in many divided churches. There are in it passages which, for many, date their deeper impressions of the presence of the Divine in the crises of life. Some reference to this spiritual romance may conclude this part of our work.

Inglesant's first tutor introduced him to Plato, and in bidding the youth farewell, he used these words :—

"I have done my best to show you those hidden truths which the heathen divines knew as well as we ; how much more then ought we to follow them, who have the light of Christ ! Do not talk of these things, but keep them in your heart ; hear what all men say, but follow no man ; there is nothing in the world of any value but the divine Light,—follow it. . . . It will reveal itself when the time shall come. . . . I foresee dark clouds overhanging the Church, but let not these affright you ; behind, the Divine Light shineth—the Light that shineth from the hill of God. Remember, it is the very seal of a gentleman—to obey. Whenever—and in whatever place—the Divine Light shall appear to you, be assured it will never teach you anything contrary to this."

Later, he is presented by another tutor with the *Life of St. Theresa.* At first it repelled him by its petty austerities and other details which seemed to him absurd ; but

"the great doctrine of Divine Illumination fascinated him. The sublime but mysterious way of devotion pointed out in it, while quite different from anything he had previously heard of, was still sufficiently in accordance with the romantic habit of his mind, and with the mystic

philosophy in which his old master had trained him, to cause him to follow it with an eager sympathy. The natural and inspired writings of the great mystics breathe a celestial purity. . . . The rest from individual effort, the calm after long striving, the secret joy in God, the acquiescing in His will, in which the true elevation of devotion lies, and which is not the effect of lively imagination or of fruitful inventions—of these all men are not capable; but all may reach the silent and humble adoration of God which arises out of a pure and quiet mind. . . . What must this be but the Divine Light of which his old master had so often told him?"

A further lesson followed, which is perhaps specially needful for us at the present time; it is that

"the soul or spirit of every man in passing through life among familiar things is among supernatural things always, and many things seem to me miraculous which men think nothing of, such as the memory by which we live again in place and time, and of which St. Augustine says many pertinent things; and the love of one another by which we are led out of ourselves, and made to act against our own nature by that of another, or, rather, by a higher nature than that of any of us; and a thousand fancies and feelings which have no adequate cause among outward things."

The hero's visit to Little Gidding and its pious community has become part of

English literature, and a recent work has recorded a more exact account of that Anglican Society.[1] Mr. Ferrar, its head, had much to tell his young visitor about George Herbert, although Herbert had in certain points criticised the practices of mystical devotion. At a later stage, Inglesant has an interview with John Hobbes, whose entire philosophy of religion was based on Authority, and was frankly distrustful of the inner Light. Inglesant, with due respect, declares—" I am loath to believe what you say. . . . I would willingly believe that God is speaking to me with an immediate voice, nay more, that I may enter into the very life that God is leading, and partake of His nature." Thus prepared, Inglesant goes on in his heaven-guided career. Contact with the Great Platonist, More, deepens his sense that Plato is not enough, tending to emphasise too much reason and dogma ; and his heart was now filled with the love of Jesus. Yet More's teaching rooted in him the sense of the " all-pervading Spirit of God " as controlling all life in the Universe. His feelings

[1] See *Little Gidding and its Inmates*, by J. E. Acland, M.A. London, 1903. S.P.C.K.

now were summed up in the sentence—"I desire to serve my Heavenly Master; but I do not find the way." The answer came —"He must teach you; only follow your heart when it points to Him."

But the heart alone, is it enough? That is the problem of mystical devotion, and it is Inglesant's problem. Can a man have life's wisdom, and walk with Christ as well? Can the voice of Reason, and the inner Light and voice of truth go hand in hand? Were it not better to seek the cloistered life of study and meditation than to pass out into the world? Here is the key to the whole book. Inglesant hesitated; but at last he decided to go out, believing that only in the prompted and lighted and guided way through the world could He find his Lord.

The romance pursues its intensely interesting course accordingly. The hero gains fresh courage from an encounter and conference with Molinos, whose principles claimed a certain liberation from papal restraints, and appeared to draw nearer to the Church of his own English birth. Erelong, after many wanderings, we find him in a restful eventide at Oxford, solacing

himself with Music which had always played a large part in his life.

Music indeed echoes through the pages of this romance, associated with the undertone of deep piety and of unceasing search for the will of God. There is no greater ally to devotion, especially of that type which is here represented. The late J. T. Merz, the distinguished historian of philosophy, in a volume issued before his decease, wrote—"... the inner life or world is described nearly exclusively in borrowed terms. Language indeed possesses a comparatively small number of words which seem to point for their origin to something which is not clearly and compactly represented in the sensuous world. ... There is indeed one peculiar form of expression, one powerful means of communication given to us, in musical sounds and their composition; and to many persons this affords a means of expression and communication within the region of emotions, feelings, longings, and desires. This form of expression, this peculiar language of sound, stands quite apart, reveals a world of its own, and refuses to be translated into ordinary speech." [1]

[1] Merz, *Religion and Science*, pp. 127-128.

In the romance of Inglesant there is at the close this striking passage :—

" Every lovely fancy, every moment of delight, every thought and thrill of pleasure which music calls forth, or which, already existing, is beautified and hallowed by music, does not die. Such as these become fairy existences, spiritual creatures, shadowy but real, and of an inexpressibly delicate grace and beauty, which live in melody, and float and throng before the sense whenever the harmony that gave and maintains their life exists again in sound. They are children of the earth, and yet above it ; they recall the human needs and hopes from which they sprang. They have shadowy sex and rank, and diversity of bearing, as of the different actors' parts that fill the stage of life. Poverty and want are there, but, as in an allegory or morality, purified and released from suffering. The pleasures and delights of past ages thus live again in sound, the sorrows and disappointments of other days and of other men mingle with our own, and soften and subdue our hearts."

The passage is one of pure Mysticism, and of unusual beauty. Mr. Shorthouse, himself a man in business in a great city, conceived in Inglesant a character such as Keble might have had in mind when he penned his lines describing the " melodies of the everlasting chime," and the wayfarers who " carry music in their heart,"

and whose "secret souls a holy strain repeat." Are not such, whether saints, scholars, or business men, ornaments of the Church, and examples for us all ?

We must not go further in details, and indeed the present reference is as much the expression of a personal debt to a noble book of devotion as a direct expansion of our thesis. The active life of the hero corresponds with his lofty and consoling dreams. He "follows the gleam," through many stumblings, many sufferings. He fights temptation, doubt, sorrow, and death. An old age awaits him of refined peace and self-repression.

"We are," he says at last, "like children or men in a tennis court, and before our conquest is won the dim twilight comes and stops the game; nevertheless, let us keep our places, and above all things hold fast by the law of life we feel within. This was the method which Christ followed. . . . Let us follow in His steps, and, without waiting for 'our mortal passage,' tread the free and spacious streets of that Jerusalem which is above."

Under this head, it is proposed to attempt a brief survey of the relations of Mysticism in a Christian form to certain wide conceptions of the World. Inevitably, as most conveniently, we turn first to the sphere or world of Nature.

1. THE WORLD OF NATURE

Nature cannot of course be contemplated in absolute isolation from Man or Human Nature, because it is through Man that the picture of Nature is mediated. The disappearance of Man from the vast spaces of the planetary system might leave the "spacious firmament on high" still proclaiming "its great original." But it would be to a vanished audience. Creation owes at any rate its survival values to man. There, indeed, we are fellow-workers with God as we are in the realm of grace and salvation. But it is not to be denied that popular doctrines among us have frequently taken a pessimistic view of human nature;

and postponing meantime the question of Man, we may turn to the poets, along with at least some of the philosophers, to trace the mystical outlook upon Nature. They come nearest to that inspiring and hopeful view which yields itself to Nature's charm and beauty; they relax our haunting self-consciousness, which so often wrinkles its careworn brow. Their attitude, above all others perhaps, develops that mystical impersonal mood which lies midway between our obsession of self and a purely pantheistic emotion.

It is undeniably in Wordsworth that we find this attitude. Here we cannot do better than follow Dean Inge, whose enthusiasm goes so far as to proclaim Wordsworth superior to the mystics of the cloister "in aloofness and loneliness of mind." He ventures even to distinguish in Wordsworth the well-known stages of the mystic approach to God, purgation, illumination, and union. The theory, though ingenious, probably exceeds the bounds of fact. Wordsworth was not at any rate an ascetic in his outlook. Purgation or discipline did not express his conscious attitude at any epoch of his life;

he was indeed uncloistered though always (sometimes even tediously) full of high seriousness. But the dominant reaction of Nature on his character was joyous, almost at times ecstatic. In one and the same poem he says :—

> " My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky " ;

and then also :—

> " I could wish my days and years to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety."

There, if we choose, is ecstasy. But it is the outcome of a piety based upon Nature.

So also he speaks, in a familiar passage, of

> " A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns. . . .
> A motion and a Spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
> And rolls through all things."

Throughout there is this keynote of joy, even when it mingles with prosaic moralisings. " The highest bliss," he declares, " is theirs who rise from earth to heaven." It is " a bliss ineffable,"

> " In which the affections gently lead me on,
> While, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul."

We need not stint our sense of his deep joy in Nature by forcing him into the limits of the threefold mystic experience. What is clear even in the long-drawn-out verses of the *Excursion* is that he knew and welcomed that unaccountable exultation which George Eliot claims for the Hebrew, in the tale of *Daniel Deronda* — an exultation as of "morning herds." He shared the pulse that beats in every form of natural being; the celandine, the daisy, the sunlight, the sights and sounds of life expressing its sympathy with the universe. Yet he was aware of evil and suffering— of a world which "is too much with us." It is one of his best-remembered sonnets, although it betrays in its passionate close his nearness to a pagan fellowship with Nature :—

> "Great God! I 'd rather be
> A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn."

His impatience of aught which dimmed this elemental happiness reaches a remarkable height when he declares that "our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting," and

we ourselves but stars which have "elsewhere had their setting." We are assailed by "obstinate questionings of sense and outward things: Fallings from us, vanishings, blank misgivings of a creature, moving about in worlds not realised." Yet are we "trailing clouds of glory from God who is our home." For him the great moments come when, in spite of all interruptions, problems, perplexities, "we see into the life of things." Like the patriarch, Wordsworth endured as seeing the invisible, though it was not without a natural impatience.

This deep absorption in Nature and its delights has suggested in some quarters a charge against Wordsworth that he was indifferent to Man, just as, in other quarters, his almost pagan outcry for the deeper vision has made him theologically suspect. But the poet's human interest is very amply established by the well-known fact that his entire work has, running through it, a constant thread of homely sympathy. His feet are firmly planted on simple themes about simple persons, in whom indeed he loves to find a passion for Nature in unsophisticated phrases. No doubt he owns

(in the *Prelude*) that in earlier days he was more attracted to Nature than to Man. Yet in point of fact much of his verse enshrines some human story, often very commonplace. The mark of his genius is that from time to time some sign escapes him which reveals his loftier outlook. This is in fact the rare gift of which Horace speaks—*Communia proprie dicere*—to make a commonplace theme his own. It is just one high privilege of the mystic, whether he be ascetic or symbolical, to mount like Jacob's angels on a common ladder into heaven.

That Wordsworth felt keenly the grossness of many things in Nature is beyond doubt, but no one has done more to shed on such things "a light which never was on sea or sky." One thing which favoured him in this respect was that he lived before the stern invasion of natural science, which at one dark period of his life conquered for some years the Muse of Tennyson. To Tennyson, in that shadowed time, Nature appeared to be "red in tooth and claw with raven." And Tennyson's Mysticism then approached the ascetic type. In Wordsworth, however, there is

no real distrust of Nature. Does not he say—" Nature never did betray the heart that loved her " ? He seems almost to avert his enraptured gaze from that in Nature which seems to be brutal or inhuman.

And it is only in that way that the Christian mystic can read the ultimate truth of suffering and seeming waste. St. Paul pointed out this better way when he wrote—" The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God ; . . . for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth until now. . . . And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God " (Rom. viii. 19, 22, 28). That seems to be Wordsworth's way—to recall in every sorrowful moment the glory that is in the passing sorrow—the truth that we endure the Cross, despising the shame, for the joy that is set before us.

2. THE WORLD OF MAN

Dr. Rufus M. Jones in 1923 contributed to a volume called *Religious Foundations* a paper in which he asks the question,

"How shall we think of Man"?[1] It seems to bear on the question next before us.

We have tried to view the mystic method as applied to Nature; it may now be permissible to consider it in relation to Human Nature. In the first place, Dr. Jones encounters the paradox that it was Augustine, the champion of the Holy Spirit, himself a mystic of the Mystics, who set in motion down the ages the disheartening theory of Man as a being utterly depraved. Mediaevalism proceeded to build upon it. Calvinism at the Reformation endorsed it. But the mediaeval mystics, while not openly dissenting, created by their very attitude and character a caveat against despair. They declared that there remains in fallen Man a "spark" of the Divine; and it may be added that Calvin, in his turn, while describing fallen Man as a corpse (*quasi cadaver*), held that after all there remains in Man a "seed of religion."

The truth is, that doctrine by its logical and formal nature must be modified in order to maintain its own usefulness in a

[1] *Religious Foundations*, ed. by Rufus M. Jones, LL.D., p. 30 ff.

divinely guided Church. It is not therefore necessary to dwell on the extreme sentence passed by formal logic on sinful Man ; the real need is to emphasise its remission by the love of God. Every Christian Church might stop business to-morrow if Man were so totally corrupt as to offer no access to the Spirit.

Even more convincing is the fact that throughout the ages of Christendom the mystic in all the Churches has been under the sway of God's Spirit who searches the really " deep things " of human experience. And one of the deepest is down in the heart of the worst of sinners ; it is a belief in the Love of God. Dr. Rufus Jones claims a large share of the credit in preaching this truth for the Quakers ; " they form," he says, " the first organised body of Christians who built their entire faith upon the principle that something of God is present in every man." It may be so ; but Augustine long before had written—" Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it finds rest in Thee." The Quakers, he asserts, broke with Augustine's conception of Man which Calvin had greatly reinforced, and they set over against it their

affirmation of the "Inward Light," or "the divine seed." Yet, as we have seen, the latter phrase is Calvin's own. We shall not debate the divergent claims. It is to-day beyond challenge that every man has in him something spiritual, to which we all believe that God's Spirit can and does appeal.

The immediate fact, however, for the present discussion is that, whether by Quakerism or otherwise, most people to-day agree that salvation comes by the inward voice of the Spirit in sinful Man. The gentler and more humane view that men are saveable gained much from many sources, and not least from writers like Wordsworth, Carlyle, Coleridge, and Emerson. And it is to-day, I imagine, the general gospel-message that, as God is a Spirit and Man is in Jesus Christ the child of God, there is thus a bond between heaven and humanity which must sooner or later bring them together. The service rendered in this respect by Christian Mysticism is hardly to be questioned, because its aim is to seek the realisation of this fundamental relationship.

No great poet of recent days has done

more than Browning to strengthen the belief in that "Love divine, all loves excelling" of which Wesley wrote in his famous hymn, and which is the burning centre of true Mysticism. Dean Inge has pointed out that Browning actually uses the image of the "Spark" in these lines :—

"It could not be because my eyes grew dim
Thou couldst not find the love there—thanks to Him
Who never is dishonoured in the Spark
He gave us from this fire of fires, and bade
Remember whence it springs, nor be afraid
While that burns on, though all the rest grow dark."

It is true that loud complaints are heard from different quarters that the modern man has lost his sense of sin, and sometimes this has been ascribed to the mystical accent placed on the Love of God. We may perhaps admit that our age does not readily accept Bishop Heber's view that—

"Every prospect pleases,
And only Man is vile."

A more scriptural and rational view is gaining, which suggests that Nature's beauty is a constant witness to the fact that Man also, as part of God's world, has in him the capacity to recognise the beautiful, and to feel in it his own call to

be obedient to the heavenly vision. Where indeed were the beauty of Nature if man were blotted out of the prospect? The fact of Christ is itself a testimony to human possibilities of the true, the beautiful, and the good. The mystic attitude includes expressly the love of all things beautiful. Its relation to Christian experience and to human life is one of indispensable help and power.

3. THE WORLD OF PHILOSOPHY

In a former lecture,[1] something was said of the psychological inquiry into Religion, and of its effect on the idea and nature of religious Mysticism; and the attitude of some recent writers and philosophical thinkers was noted. The philosophers have usually a somewhat languid interest in the problem. There is a prevalent impression that psychologists must be left at present to continue and work out their practical researches. In the meantime, some of the psychologists are favourable, some (like Leuba) are distinctly hostile, and some (like Dr. Pratt) distinguish between a harmless and an abnormal type. As regards philo-

[1] See page 146 and following.

sophy strictly so called, it would be wrong to conclude that there is any necessary hostility between philosophy and Mysticism. That is surely a misunderstanding. It is largely if not entirely due to the impression that religious experience of this special kind comes by the voluntary displacement of Reason. A certain and not unnatural prejudice against Intellectualism confirms that notion, with the result that much of current evangelism misses the mark by appealing almost wholly to exceptional moods of feeling.

This opposition of Intellect to Feeling in religion is, of course, perceptible in some theological quarters. It was perhaps crystallised in the teaching of Ritschl, where it appears as a revolt against metaphysics or the effort to present a conception of the World as coherent and one. The conception of a World in disorder, and in opposition to humanity, is rooted in religious experience, while philosophy mostly seeks to realise a world of order. Mysticism at the outset seems to take refuge in a region apart; it suggests that we may escape from the disorder, the enmity of the world, by effecting contact

with forces which are transcendent, and not attainable by reasoning. These forces are spiritual, not natural, and they are summed up in God. Thus in Nature there is everywhere, for the spiritually guided vision, the impress of divine power and love; in Man the higher life beats with a pulse which is in rhythm with God; it is the life of the Spirit. In the wide universe, the objects of knowledge have been stamped with a divine image. An ancient writer indeed pictures Nature as audibly declaring that the World is a mint in which the office of Nature, as *Monetaria*, is to see that those objects conform to the die divinely prescribed. Augustine's conception of the world is not really very different. The objects are developed as plants from the seed, and the world itself is a process which may be likened to the growth of a tree.

At such a point, one cannot but recall the familiar hymn of Frances Ridley Havergal (Hymn 256 in the *Hymnary*), beginning :—

> "Take my life, and let it be
> Consecrated, Lord, to Thee. . . ."
>
> "Take my heart—*it is thine own*;
> It shall be Thy royal throne."

Her attitude here is characteristically mystical. And some reader will perhaps remember her favourite phrase of a morning among her flowers—"My Father made them all."

There can be little doubt that the obvious return to-day to a mystical view is to some extent due to the unsettled state of philosophical thought. It has even been bluntly asserted that this reaction is "a revolt against a dry and tyrannous intellectualism."[1] One might add that it is aggravated by the unparalleled differences among the intellectualists. There was at a former day much criticism of the endless differences of religious teachers and writers; the quarrels of Churches are still emphasised. But what are these compared with the dissidence of philosophers? Doubtless, as has been said, their aim is to find a unity. They seek the One in the Many. But who will argue, to-day, that there is very much to feed our hopes of their success? The real position in Theology itself is that it has largely become a history and philosophy of Religion, while on the other hand recent philosophy shews signs of immersing itself

[1] E. Herman, *Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, p. 143.

in politics, or of becoming lost in psychological romances.

Mysticism, at any rate, is always a symptom of spiritual hunger. It is the inevitable and unfailing result of uncertainties and contradictions in the efforts of discursive Reason. Accordingly, we find a common impression that it offers a secure retreat from the intellectual strife. It may even be admitted that it is too often accepted and vaunted as superior in itself to the efforts of thought, although certain forms of thinking may at times be hailed as more or less encouraging. "Religion without thought" has been suggested as a motto for the mystic. While, however, devout people are sometimes betrayed into such impatient utterances, it can hardly be denied that there are philosophers who themselves lose faith in intellect; of these the Pragmatist is more or less an example. The jaunty remark of William James will be remembered: "Rationalism sticks to logic and the empyrean. Empiricism sticks to the external senses. Pragmatism is willing to take anything, to follow either logic or the senses, and to count the humblest and most personal experiences.

She will count mystical experiences if they have practical consequences. . . . Her only test of probable truth is what works best." [1]

This, however, is not "religion without thought"; it is rather "religion without hope in thought." It says, practically, "The philosophers are hopelessly at variance; the practical man can only attack their camp, and despoil them of anything really useful." It is not in such a spirit that we should frame our religious life. Rather should we seek the illumination of the Divine Mind—"the light of all our seeing"—by a higher if even a seemingly impracticable method. Mysticism cannot gain from this attempt to disparage philosophy. Yet we may quote the Pragmatists as being, at any rate, not unfavourable to the mystic, without adopting the implied disparagement of intellect in itself.

It is, of course, unfortunate when leading mystical writers seem to echo this note. Miss Evelyn Underhill, for example, has been justly criticised here. To her the soul's problem is Whither? surely one of the most ancient questions of philosophy. But she observes—"To address such a

[1] William James, *Pragmatism*, p. 80.

question to our intellects is to invite failure in the reply." She declares against the philosophers, and bids us resort rather to "the artists, the poets, the prophets, the seers; the happy owners of unspoilt perceptions; the possessors of that intuition which alone is able to touch upon absolute things." [1]

That is a frank if not a courteous notice to the philosophers to quit. It cannot and must not be endorsed by those who remember how many of the noblest thinkers have been eminent mystics, while breathing the air of Platonism, of severe theological doctrine, of the loftiest rationalism as in the Cambridge Platonists, and in more recent days of Idealism itself. There are not a few also who go further and higher, and claim our Lord Himself as a Mystic, but not of any anti-intellectual type; for He met the teachers of His age as a Teacher Himself. Of St. Paul also, undoubtedly mystical, it has been urged that in his teaching he presented "a demand for a reasoned interpretation." One may not immediately accept such an argument, yet it surely warns us against the assumption

[1] E. Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, p. 8.

that philosophical thought is necessarily an enemy.

On the contrary, it may be suggested that in the confused world of Reason, with its party-cries of Realist, new and old, of Rationalist, and Pragmatist, and Idealist, and its constantly changing theories and sub-theories, we may find not a few friends. It is even possible that Psychology, by plunging deeper into the human heart, may yet make the mystic way more clear, without bidding men leave the camp of thought behind. Meantime, it is surely unwise to give any cause for the charge that Mysticism is opposed to Metaphysics. The history of Metaphysics as a search for a harmonious idea of the World does not wholly justify any declaration of War between Faith and Intellect. For the greatest mystics have not infrequently given to philosophy most profound suggestions and most important thoughts. And on the other hand, the purely devotional and practical mystics have based their great messages on deep reflection.

Nor should we be afraid to find here and there in the conflicting theories the keynote of mystical faith in God and in the ultimate

harmony of things. Plato's world at any rate, while picturing the captives of the Cave, promised them liberty in a higher sphere of perfect beauty and truth. And Plotinus, so thoroughly, if at times fantastically, explored that world as to make it an inspiration to many of the noblest thinkers and teachers, as well as to leaders in the practical business of life. Kant found the solution of the puzzle of a human consciousness, shut up within stone walls, in an inward monitor bidding us take the way of Duty which leads to Immortality. Hegel, perhaps even more, opened men's eyes to the vista of harmony and peace within the temple of thought. Even the emancipated thinking of William James commends to all seekers after God and goodness the duty of a high and courageous "seriousness."

And in Royce, unless we mistake his attitude, Pragmatism clothes itself in a new and fascinating shape. As against the common charge that Mysticism is simply a mode of getting rid of individual problems and duties, he offers the truth that the individual exists in a purposive world which speaks peace to men of good-will.

Although he rejects the mystic definition of Being, and sees a better and fuller conception, there is nothing in literature more emphatic than his recognition of the real merits of Mysticism, as far as it goes. The passage in his work on *The World and the Individual* is little short of eulogy :

" The mystic asserts that the real cannot be wholly independent of knowledge. Herein he is right. He asserts that the reality of which you think and speak is first of all a reality meant by you. This is profoundly true. He declares that within yourself lies the sole motive that leads you to distinguish truth from error, reality from unreality, the world from the instant's passing contents. And in all this the mystic, whether Hindoo or Christian, is a representative of the simple facts about Being—facts which everybody concerned with the subject ought to know merely as a matter of general education. . . . Moreover, he is a decidedly practical thinker. . . . But as a religious teacher he is inspiring, first of all, just because he appeals to your own individuality. He breathes the common spirit of all the higher religions when he conceives your goal as an inner salvation. . . . It is no wonder that the mystics have been the spiritual counsellors of humanity. . . . To the mystics, then, has been historically committed the feeding of the flock of the faithful, the gathering of the heavenly manna, the saving of humanity from the abyss into which the mere respectability of dogmatic Realism, if left to

itself, would have infallibly plunged all the deeper interests of the Spirit." [1]

A more generous as well as just appreciation can hardly be found in philosophical writings.

4. THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

The relation of Mysticism to Science recalls ancient claims by pretenders in all ages to a certain magical or supernatural control over physical forces. It may also be associated in some minds with difficult modern problems. We have to-day a certain number of "cults" of which Mr. Atkins has just given a fairly impartial description.[2] Faith-healing, Christian Science, and various forms of Theosophy, are to be found in our great cities; and it may be admitted that they represent a certain affinity with Mysticism. They are methods of establishing control of a spiritual universe within which it is believed that higher and exceptional results may be secured by prayer, and communion with the Unseen. Our present inquiry is, as has been precisely stated already, limited

[1] Royce, *The World and the Individual*, i. 189-91.

[2] *Modern Religious Cults*, by G. G. Atkins, D.D.

by the definite belief in the Holy Spirit of the Christian creeds. Is there discernible then, in a definite Christian Mysticism, the presence of a vital connection with those vast researches which Natural Science has in some measure completed, and is daily and hourly supplementing? The bygone century was frankly hostile to such a suggestion. Huxley represented for a time the supposed opposition of Science to theology, though not to religion. It is significant to find him writing in 1873, "We are in the midst of a gigantic movement, greater than that which preceded and produced the Reformation, and really only the continuation of that movement." This second Renaissance, however, offered no encouragement to theology, because theology had no necessary relation to religion or to ethics; indeed, Huxley says, after reading Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, "It led me to know that a deep sense of religion was compatible with the entire absence of theology." Huxley would plainly have rejected with decision the idea of a mystical element in physical science, while perhaps he would have favoured a straightforward Positivism. The Positivism of August

Comte, however, illustrated the proverb, *Omnia exeunt in mysterium*, since it relapsed into a quasi-mystical reverence of the Mother and Babe. But Huxley was just enough to disclaim any necessary antagonism between Science and Religion.[1] His temperament, nevertheless, was not such as would readily sympathise with any mystical intervention in Science; he was always emphatic on the necessity of rigorously guarding the scientific sphere. It is not easy to conjecture how he would have regarded recent utterances, by eminent scientific writers, on Spiritualism, Telepathy, and the like. In the mind of a great poet of the nineteenth century, Tennyson, the theory of Evolution created for a season something like blank despair.

But time has already "brought in its revenges." The new century has shewn signs of a reviving spiritual tendency. This change has come more rapidly than in the later stages of Mediaevalism, and it has come in a wider field of sympathy. In the Mediaeval evolution, physical Nature was not specially interpreted from a scientific standpoint, but rather and most im-

[1] Huxley, *Collected Essays*, iv. 160.

pressively from an aesthetic. Dante was keenly interested in its beauty and its living variety; Raphael caught its reflection in his paintings; Gothic architecture transferred it to the mediaeval cathedrals. But on the other hand, Science as such was at a discount; Copernicus had to hide his discoveries, and at a much later date Galileo was forced, kneeling, to abjure the heresy of his predecessor. Not only so; but the highest authorities in the Church were implicated in the persecution of Science. The saints of Catholic Mysticism and the leaders of the Reformation themselves were at one in denouncing the new theories.[1]

But our own age may be congratulated on its more liberal views of Science as affecting religious faith. And here we must perhaps give some credit for the present liberty of research to the softening influence of the widespread zest for natural beauty and grandeur. Much is also due for this emancipation of Science to a certain revival of Wonder and of Cosmic Emotion among great masses of the people. The educated man of to-day has acquired through long

[1] See for many curious particulars, A. D. White, *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, i. pp. 117, 126, 127.

ages of poetry, painting, and architecture such a taste for Nature that the incessant marvels disclosed by scientific discovery are more or less welcome to him. People have long talked of rising "from Nature to Nature's God." And Physical Science is seldom regarded as irreligious or heretical, whatever may be its fully established results.

These results, regarded as "laws of Nature," have seldom failed, in the long run, to move the religious mind to profound awe. The very conception of Law as prevailing everywhere in such a vast region has always produced a feeling which is mystical, inasmuch as in itself Law is not materialistic, but spiritual, and also because Law to most people suggests God. Newton's mood was of this sort, when he declared that the Law of Gravitation suggested to his mind an Almighty but invisible Hand holding the planets, and tightening or relaxing its hold as they swung on their way. It is in Astronomy indeed that religious imagination and religious emotions have most frequently found their home. Dr. Chalmers' *Astronomical Discourses* contain a volume of mystical eloquence seldom in its kind surpassed.

But our own time has no doubt produced even grander emotions as we welcomed each new disclosure of the exhaustless treasures of Science. For example, the modern conception of Matter suggests something like a spiritual universe. The marvels of Radium and of Radioactive substances have led Professor Soddy,[1] one of its most devoted students and exponents, into fields of quasi-religious speculation. The theory of a Fourth Dimension brings with it astounding results as to Space and Time. It has helped to create a new philosophy of Realism resembling in some respects a Mystic's Dream. A distinguished master in Science has not been afraid to speak of "The Bible of Nature"; [2] and he concludes his survey by reaffirming the idealistic doctrine which "finds the ultimate reality of the universe in mind or spirit, and its end in the perfecting of spiritual life." He maintains indeed that "the most real thing in the world is our own conscious experience." [3] In such language we recognise a remarkably mystical accent.

[1] See *The Interpretation of Radium*, 1909.

[2] Professor J. Arthur Thomson, Bross Lecturer, 1907.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 242, 243.

The late Sir Henry Jones, almost with his last breath, confirmed his life-long message that this is a "friendly Universe"; or in his favourite poet's phrase that—

> "God 's in His heaven;
> All 's right with the world."

This surely means a world filled and actuated by the Spirit of Love.

It is not perhaps too much to conjecture that this transcendental idea of the results of Science gained a distinct impulse from Henry Drummond's book on *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, published in the closing epoch of last century, and known far and wide. Its thesis was that "To Science, defining it as a working principle, this mighty process of amelioration is simply *Evolution*. To Christianity, discerning the end through the means, it is *Redemption*."[1] It may be that Drummond's standpoint inverted the order of religious thinking, which ought perhaps to prompt us to speak rather of "*Spiritual* Law in the Natural World." For his is the true method of the mystic—to find the Presence of God through His Spirit everywhere in

[1] Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, Conclusion.

Nature by an instinct which is aroused within the soul. Shakespeare had long ago written of the kind of life which—

> "Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything." [1]

But Drummond's scientific training lends more than a poet's sanction to his argument. His temperament, too, was that of a joyous faith which made his technical work a continual abiding in the Presence of God. And the theological criticism which confronted and distressed him for a time has long since melted into a profound esteem and affection for one who thus recognised everywhere the laws of a loving Father.

Not less notable, although less widely known as yet, is the attitude and the work of Dr. Newman Smyth, in our own century, in a volume published in 1908, entitled *Through Science to Faith.* His special appeal is to Biology, the science of life everywhere in Nature. This is emphatically the Science best adapted to impress the religious mind with the Presence of God, that central theme and goal of the

[1] *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 1.

mystic in every age. He asks the very question which was in Drummond's thoughts—Can any true analogy be followed from Nature straight upward into the Spiritual World? He answers by pointing out, for one thing, that St. Francis of Assisi in his "spiritual ecstasy" very nearly reached "the great biological generalisation of modern Science, that all living nature is of one descent and constitutes one relationship." [1] He argues that this continuity of life is the vehicle for "the energies of the Spirit." He offers a gallant defence of Henry Drummond, admitting that writer's error in identifying, or seeming to identify, natural laws with spiritual laws. But he contends that Drummond's book is still right in its underlying thought, that there is throughout the world of Nature and Man a "spiritual unity." "There is," he urges, "nothing in our knowledge of Nature to preclude the possibility of some more spiritual relation of mind to matter." He reminds us that St. Augustine spoke of Creation as "the poem of the divine ideas." And he fitly quotes Browning in *Paracelsus*:—

[1] Newman Smyth, *Through Science to Faith*, p. 16.

> "All tended to Mankind,
> And, man produced, all has its end thus far:
> But in completed man begins anew
> A tendency to God. Prognostics told
> Man's near approach; so, in man's self,
> August anticipations, symbols, types,
> Of a dim splendour ever on before
> In that eternal circle run by life."

Nor is Dr. Newman Smyth less instructive on this spiritual character of Science in his subsequent book called *Constructive Natural Theology*. It is no doubt true that there he speaks of "a scientific type of spiritual-mindedness," and distinguishes it from "mystical vision," "mystical pietism," "transcendental imagination." He even quotes Pascal as being in some sense apart from the mystics—a view hardly general, to-day. But he makes amends by the admission that this spirituality of Science represents something like "intuition in the act of living." That is Bergson's brilliant phrase. In reality, however, there is nothing here at issue. For such intuition is precisely that which the mystic seeks, whose life is hid with Christ in God. And often he marvellously finds it. We need not halt over these various expressions. Enough to accept the truth

that Science has often found, by intuition, its way to God.

It is not without fitness that we close here our enquiry as regards Mysticism and the World; for the World of Animate Nature is that in which we live and move and have our being, and herein also the Presence of God becomes felt. Wordsworth says—"There is a Spirit in the woods," and few are those who do not feel the mystic atmosphere around them in some quiet rural scene. Yet this spiritual sense responds also to the busy life of crowded cities, if the music of heaven is not silenced in our hearts. Only we must be warned against an extravagant Mysticism, leading to eccentric views and self-deception. The safeguard will be found in adhering to the lines of a sane and customary faith, founded on Scripture and on a reasonable creed. The practice of prayer for the guidance of the Spirit will also protect the devout believer from losing that definiteness and self-control which mere emotionalism endangers. Let it be remembered also that steady practical duty is a real factor in all the great mystics. Let us remember the well-known verses of

Keble, and their warning against "winding the soul too high." An intelligent and rational Mysticism will prove a safeguard alike against barren emotions and against those equally barren doubts to which so many minds in our time are liable.

This is what Keble meant by placing as his motto on the title-page of the *Christian Year* the words of Isaiah :—

> "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

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